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PRIVATE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

HORACE WALPOLE,

EARL OF ORFORD.

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Jan. 15, 1775.

You have made me very happy by saying your journey to Naples is laid aside. Perhaps it made too great impression on me; but you must reflect, that all my life I have satisfied myself with your being perfect, instead of trying to be so myself. I don't ask you to return, though I wish it: in truth there is nothing to invite you. I don't want you to come and breathe fire and sword against the Bostonians, like that second duke of Alva the inflexible lord G * * * G * * *; or to anathematize the court and all its works, like the incorruptible B. who scorns lucre, except when he can buy an hundred thousand acres from naked Caribs for a song. I don't want you to do any thing like a party-man. I trust you think of every party as I do, with contempt, from lord Chatham's

mustard-bowl down to lord Rockingham's harts-horn. All perhaps will be tried in their turns; and yet, if they had genius, might not be mighty enough to save us—From some ruin or other I think nobody can, and what signifies an option of mischiefs?

An account is come of the Bostonians having voted an army of sixteen thousand men, who are to be called *minute-men*, as they are to be ready at a minute's warning. Two directors or commissioners, I don't know what they are called, are appointed. There has been too a kind of mutiny in the 5th regiment. A soldier was found drunk on his post. Gage, in this time of *danger*, thought rigour necessary, and sent the fellow to a court-martial. They ordered 200 lashes. The general ordered them to improve their sentence. Next day it was published in the Boston Gazette. He called them before him, and required them on oath to abjure the communication: three officers refused. Poor G. is to be scape-goat, not for this, but for what was a reason against employing him, incapacity. I wonder at the precedent! Howe is talked of for his successor.—Well, I have done with *you!*—Now I shall go gossip with lady Ailesbury.

You must know, madam, that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle tree, a weeping-willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been new christened Helicon. Ten

years ago there lived a madam * * *, an old rough humourist who passed for a wit; her daughter who passed for nothing, married to a captain * * *, full of good-natured officiousness. These good folks were friends of miss Rich,[1] who carried me to dine with them at * * *, now Pindus. They caught a little of what was then called taste, built and planted, and begot children, till the whole caravan were forced to go abroad to retrieve. Alas! Mrs. Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth muse, as romantic as mademoiselle Scuderi, and as sophisticated as Mrs. V * * * *. The captain's fingers are loaded with cameos, his tongue runs over with *virtù;* and that both may contribute to the improvement of their own country, they have introduced *bouts-rimés* as a new discovery. They hold a Parnassus-fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes. A Roman vase dressed with pink ribbons and myrtles receives the poetry, which is drawn out every festival; six judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest compositions, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Mrs. Calliope * * *,[2] kiss her

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[1] Daughter of sir Robert Rich, and sister to the second wife of George lord Lyttelton.

[2] Mrs. Miller.

fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle, with—I don't know what. You may think this a fiction, or exaggeration.—Be dumb, unbelievers! The collection is printed, published—Yes, on my faith! there are *bouts-rimés* on a buttered muffin, by her grace the duchess of Northumberland; receipts to make them by Corydon the venerable, alias * * *; others very pretty, by lord Palmerston; some by lord C * * *; many by Mrs. * * * herself, that have no fault but wanting metre; and immortality promised to her without end or measure. In short, since folly, which never ripens to madness but in this hot climate, ran distracted, there never was any thing so entertaining, or so dull—for you cannot read so long as I have been telling.

January 17.

Before I could finish this, I received your dispatches by sir T. Clarges, and a most entertaining letter in three tomes. It is being very dull not to be able to furnish a quarter so much from your own country—but what can I do? You are embarked in a new world, and I am living on the scraps of an old one, of which I am tired. The best I can do is to reply to your letter, and not attempt to amuse you when I have nothing to say. I think the parliament meets to-day or in a day or two—but I hope you are coming—Your brother says so, and madame du Deffand says so; and

sure it is time to leave Paris, when you know ninety of the inhabitants. There seems much affectation in those that will not know you ;[3] and affectation is always a littleness—it has been even rude ; but to be sure the rudeness one feels least is that which is addressed to one before there has been any acquaintance.

Ninon came,[4] because, on madame du Deffand's mentioning it, I concluded it a new work, and am disappointed. I can say this by heart. The picture of madame de Prie, which you don't seem to value, and so madame du Deffand says, I believe I shall dispute with you; I think it charming, but when offered to me years ago, I would not take it—it was now given to you a little *à mon intention.*

I am sorry that, amongst all the verses you have sent me, you should have forgotten what you commend the most, *Les trois exclamations;* I hope you will bring them with you. Voltaire's are intolerably stupid, and not above the level of officers in garrison. Some of M. de Pezay's are very pretty, though there is too much of them; and in truth I had seen them before. Those on madame de la Valiere pretty too, but one is a little tired of Venus and the Graces. I am most pleased with your own—and if you have a mind

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[3] The duke de Choiseul. [4] The Life of Ninon de l'Enclos.

to like them still better, make madame du Deffand show you mine,[5] which are neither French, nor measure, nor metre. She is unwilling to tell me so; which diverts me. Yours are really genteel and new.

I envy you the Russian anecdotes[6] more than M. de Chamfort's fables, of which I know nothing; and as you say no more, I conclude I lose not much. The stories of sir Charles[7] are so far not new to me, that I heard them of him from abroad after he was mad: but I believe no mortal of his acquaintance ever heard them before; nor did they at all correspond with his former life, with his treatment of his wife, or his history with Mrs. Woffington, *qui n'étoit pas dupe.* I say nothing on the other stories you tell me of billets dropped,[8] *et pour cause.*

I think I have touched all your paragraphs, and have nothing new to send you in return. In truth, I go no where but into private rooms; for I am not enough recovered to re-launch into the world, when I have so good an excuse for avoid-

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[5] These lines do not appear.

[6] The account of the revolution in Russia which placed Catherine II. on the throne, by M. de la Rulhiere, now published. Mr. Conway had heard it read in manuscript in a private society.

[7] Sir Charles Hanbury Williams.

[8] This alludes to circumstances Mr. Conway mentions as having taken place at a ball at Versailles.

ing it. The bootikins have done wonders; but even two or three such victories will cost too dear. I submit very patiently to my lot. I am old and broken, and it never was my system to impose upon myself when one can deceive nobody else. I have spirits enough for my use, that is, amongst my friends and contemporaries: I like young people and their happiness for every thing but to live with; but I cannot learn their language, nor tell them old stories, of which I must explain every step as I go. Politics, the proper resource of age, I detest—I am contented, but see few that are so—and I never will be led by any man's self-interest. A great scene is opening, of which I cannot expect to see the end; I am pretty sure not a happy end—so that, in short, I am determined to think the rest of my life but a postscript: and as this has been too long an one, I will wish you good night, repeating what you know already, that the return of you three is the most agreeable prospect I expect to see realized. Adieu!

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 11, 1775.

I thank you, dear sir, for your kind letter, and the good account you give of yourself—nor can I blame your change from writing—that is, tran-

scribing to reading—sure you ought to divert yourself rather than others—though I should not say so, if your pen had not confined itself to transcripts.

I am perfectly well, and heed not the weather; though I wish the seasons came a little oftener into their own places instead of each others. From November, till a fortnight ago, we had warmth that I should often be glad of in summer—and since we are not sure of it then, was rejoiced when I could get it. For myself, I am a kind of delicate Hercules; and though made of paper, have, by temperance, by using as much cold water inwardly and outwardly as I can, and by taking no precautions against catching cold, and braving all weathers, become capable of suffering by none. My biennial visitant, the gout, has yielded to the bootikins, and staid with me this last time but five weeks in lieu of five months. Stronger men perhaps would kill themselves by my practice, but it has done so long with me I shall trust to it.

I intended writing to you on Gray's Life, if you had not prevented me. I am charmed with it, and prefer it to all the biography I ever saw. The style is excellent, simple, unaffected: the method admirable, artful, and judicious. He has *framed* the fragments [as a person said] so well, that they are fine drawings, if not finished pictures. For my part, I am so interested in it, that

I shall certainly read it over and over. I do not find that is likely to be the case with many *yet.* Never was a book, which people pretended to expect so much with impatience, less devoured—at least in London, where quartos are not of quick digestion. Faults are found, I hear, at Eton with the Latin Poems for false quantities—no matter—they are equal to the English—and can one say more?

At Cambridge, I should think the book would both offend much and please; at least if they are as sensible to humour as to ill-humour: and there is orthodoxy enough to wash down a camel. The Scotch and the Reviewers will be still more angry, and the latter have not a syllable to pacify them. So they who wait for their decisions will probably miss of reading the most entertaining book in the world—a punishment which they who trust to such wretched judges deserve; for who are more contemptible than such judges, but they who pin their faith on them?

In answer to you, yourself, my good sir, I shall not subscribe to your censure of Mr. Mason, whom I love and admire, and who has shewn the greatest taste possible in the execution of this work. Surely he has *said* enough in gratitude, and *done* far beyond what gratitude could demand. It seems delicacy in not expatiating on the legacy; particularizing more gratitude would have lessened the evidence of friendship, and made the

justice done to Gray's character look more like a debt. He speaks of him in slender circumstances, not as distressed: and so he was till after the deaths of his parents and aunts; and even then surely not rich. I think he does somewhere say that he meant to be buried with his mother, and not specifying any other place confirms it. In short, Mr. Mason shall never know your criticisms; he has a good heart, and would feel them, though certainly not apprized that he would merit them. A man who has so called out all his friend's virtues, could not want them himself.

I shall be much obliged to you for the prints you destine for me. The earl of Cumberland I have, and will not rob you of. I wish you had been as successful with Mr. G. as with Mr. T. I mean, if you are not yet paid—now is the time, for he has sold his house to the duke of Marlborough —I suppose he will not keep his prints long: he changes his pursuits continually and extravagantly —and then sells to indulge new fancies.

I have had a piece of luck within these two days. I have long lamented our having no certain piece written by Anne Boleyn's brother, lord Rochford. I have found a very pretty copy of verses by him in the new published volume of the Nugæ Antiquæ, though, by mistake, he is called earl of, instead of viscount Rochford. They are taken from a MS. dated twenty-eight years after the author's death, and are much in the manner of lord

Surry's and sir T. Wyat's poems. I should at first have doubted if they were not counterfeited, on reading my noble authors; but then the blunder of *earl* for *viscount* would hardly have been committed. A little modernized and softened in the cadence, they would be very pretty.

I have got the rest of the Digby pictures, but at a very high rate. There is one very large of sir Kenelm, his wife, and two sons, in exquisite preservation, though the heads of him and his wife not so highly finished as those I have — yet the boys and draperies are so amazing, that, together with the size, it is certainly the most capital miniature in the world: there are a few more, very fine too. I shall be happy to shew them to you, whenever you Burnhamize — I mean before August, when I propose making my dear old blind friend a visit at Paris — nothing else would carry me thither. I am too old to seek diversions, and too indolent to remove to a distance by choice, though not so immoveable as you to much less distance. Adieu! pray tell me what you hear is said of Gray's Life at Cambridge.

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 25, 1775.

The least I can do, dear sir, in gratitude for the cargo of prints I have received to-day from you, is to send you a medicine. A pair of bootikins will set out to-morrow morning in the machine that goes from the Queen's-head in Gray's-inn-lane. To be certain, you had better send for them where the machine inns, lest they should neglect delivering them at Milton. My not losing a moment, shews my zeal — but if you can bear a little pain, I should not press you to use them. I have suffered so dreadfully, that I constantly wear them to diminish the stock of gout in my constitution; but as your fit is very slight, and will not last, and as you are pretty sure by its beginning so late, that you will never have much; and as the gout certainly carries off other complaints, had not you better endure a little, when it is rather a remedy than a disease? I do not desire to be entirely delivered from the gout, for all reformations do but make room for some new grievance: and, in my opinion, a disorder that requires no physician, is preferable to any that does. However, I have put relief in your power, and you will judge for yourself. You must tie them as tight as you can bear, the flannel next to the flesh; and when you take them off, it should be in bed: rub your

feet with a warm cloth, and put on warm stockings, for fear of catching cold while the pores are open. It would kill any body but me, who am of adamant, to walk out in the dew in winter in my slippers in half an hour after pulling off the bootikins. A physician sent me word, good naturedly, that there was danger of catching cold after the bootikins, unless one was careful. I thanked him, but told him my precaution was, never taking any. All the winter I pass five days in a week without walking out, and sit often by the fire-side till seven in the evening. When I do go out, whatever the weather is, I go with both glasses of the coach down, and so I do at midnight out of the hottest room. I have not had a single cold, however slight, these two years.

You are too candid in submitting at once to my defence of Mr. Mason. It is true, I am more charmed with his book than I almost ever was with one. I find more people like the grave letters than those of humour, and some think the latter a little affected, which is as wrong a judgment as they could make; for Gray never wrote any thing easily but things of humour. Humour was his natural and original turn — and though, from his childhood he was grave and reserved, his genius led him to see things ludicrously and satirically; and though his health and dissatisfaction gave him low spirits, his melancholy turn was much more affected than his pleasantry in writing. You knew him enough

to know I am in the right—but the world in general always wants to be told how to think, as well as what to think. The print, I agree with you, though like, is a very disagreeable likeness, and the worst likeness of him. It gives the primness he had when under constraint; and there is a blackness in the countenance which was like him only the last time I ever saw him, when I was much struck with it; and though I did not apprehend him in danger, it left an impression on me that was uneasy and almost prophetic of what I heard but too soon after leaving him. Wilson drew the picture under much such impression, and I could not bear it in my room; Mr. Mason altered it a little, but still it is not well, nor gives any idea of the determined virtues of his heart. It just serves to help the reader to an image of the person whose genius and integrity they must admire, if they are so happy as to have a taste for either.

The Peep into the Gardens at Twickenham is a silly little book, of which a few little copies were printed some years ago for presents, and which now sets up for itself as a vendable book. It is a most inaccurate, superficial, blundering account of Twickenham and other places, drawn up by a Jewess, who has married twice, and turned Christian, poetess, and authoress. She has printed her poems too, and one complimentary copy of mine, which, in good breeding, I could not help sending

her in return for violent compliments in verse to me. I do not remember that hers were good; mine I know were very bad, and certainly never intended for the press.

I bought the first volume of Manchester, but could not read it; it was much too learned for me, and seemed rather an account of Babel than Manchester, I mean in point of antiquity. To be sure, it is very kind in an author to promise one the history of a country town, and give one a circumstantial account of the antediluvian world into the bargain. But I am simple and ignorant, and desire no more than I pay for. And then for my progenitors, Noah and the Saxons, I have no curiosity about them. Bishop Lyttelton used to plague me to death about barrows, and tumuli, and Roman camps, and all those bumps in the ground that do not amount to a most imperfect ichnography; but, in good truth, I am content with all arts when perfected, nor inquire how ingeniously people contrived to do without them — and I care still less for remains of art that retain no vestiges of art. Mr. Bryant, who is sublime in unknown knowledge, diverted me more, yet I have not finished this work, no more than he has. There is a great ingenuity in discovering all history [though it has never been written] by etymologies. Nay, he convinced me that the Greeks had totally mistaken all they went to learn in Egypt, &c. by doing, as the French do still, judge wrong

by the ear — but as I have been trying now and then for above forty years to learn something, I have not time to unlearn it all again, though I allow this is our best sort of knowledge. If I should die when I am not clear in the History of the World below its first three thousand years, I should be at a sad loss on meeting with Homer and Hesiod, or any of those *moderns* in the Elysian fields, before I know what I ought to think of them.

Pray do not betray my ignorance: the Reviewers and such literati have called me *a learned and ingenious gentleman.* I am sorry they ever heard my name, but don't let them know how irreverently I speak of the erudite, whom I dare to say they admire. These wasps, I suppose, will be very angry at the just contempt Mr. Gray had for them, and will, as insects do, attempt to sting, in hopes that their twelvepenny readers will suck a little venom from the momentary tremor they raise — but good night — and once more thank you for the prints.

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 5, 1775.

I am extremely concerned, dear sir, to hear you have been so long confined by the gout. The painting of your house may, from the damp, have given you cold — I don't conceive that paint can affect one otherwise, if it does not make one sick, as it does me of all things. Dr. Heberden, (as every physician, to make himself talked of, will set up some new hypothesis,) pretends that a damp house, and even damp sheets, which have ever been reckoned fatal, are wholesome: to prove his faith he went into his own new house totally unaired, and survived it. At Malverne they certainly put patients into sheets just dipped in the spring — however, I am glad you have a better proof that dampness is not mortal, and it is better to be too cautious than too rash. I am perfectly well, and expect to be so for a year and a half — I desire no more of the bootikins than to curtail my fits.

Thank you for the note from North's Life, though, having reprinted my Painters, I shall never have an opportunity of using it. I am still more obliged to you for the offer of an Index to my Catalogue — but as I myself know exactly where to find every thing in it, and as I dare to say nobody else will want it, I shall certainly not put you to that trouble.

Dr. Glynn will certainly be most welcome to see my house, and shall, if I am not at home:—still I had rather know a few days before, because else he may happen to come when I have company, as I have often at this time of the year, and then it is impossible to let it be seen, as I cannot ask my company, who may have come to see it too, to go out, that somebody else may see it, and I should be very sorry to have the Doctor disappointed. These difficulties, which have happened more than once, have obliged me to give every ticket for a particular day; therefore, if Dr. Glynn will be so good as to advertise me of the day he intends to come here, with a direction, I shall send him word what day he can see it.

I have just run through the two vast folios of Hutchins's Dorsetshire. He has taken infinite pains; indeed, all but those that would make it entertaining.

Pray can you tell me any thing of some relations of my own, the Burwells? My grandfather married sir Jeffery Burwell's daughter of Rongham, in Suffolk. Sir Jeffery's mother I imagine was daughter of a Jeffery Pitman, of Suffolk; at least I know there was such a man in the latter, and that we quarter the arms of Pitman. But I cannot find who lady Burwell, sir Jeffery's wife, was. Edmondson has searched in vain in the Herald's office; and I have out-lived all the ancient of my family so long, that I know not of whom to inquire,

but you of the neighbourhood. There is an old walk in the Park at Houghton, called "Sir Jeffery's Walk," where the old gentleman used to teach my father (sir Robert) his book. Those very old trees encouraged my father to plant at Houghton. When people used to try to persuade him nothing would grow there, he said, why will not other trees grow as well as those in sir Jeffery's Walk?—Other trees have grown to some purpose! Did I ever tell you that my father was descended from lord Burleigh? The latter's grand-daughter, by his son Exeter, married sir Giles Allington, whose daughter married sir Robert Crane, father of sir Edward Walpole's wife. I want but lady Burwell's name to make my genealogic tree shoot out stems every way. I have recovered a barony in fee, which has no defect but in being antecedent to any summons to Parliament, that of the Fitz Osbert's: and on my mother's side, it has mounted the Lord knows whither by the Philipps's to Henry VIIIth, and has sucked in Dryden for a great uncle: and by lady Philipps's mother, Darcy, to Edward III. and there I stop for brevity's sake —especially as Edward III. is a second Adam; who almost is not descended from Edward? as posterity will be from Charles II. and all the princes in Europe from James I. I am the first antiquary of my race. People don't know how entertaining a study it is. Who begot whom is a most amusing kind of hunting; one recovers a

grandfather instead of breaking one's own neck — and then one grows so pious to the memory of a thousand persons one never heard of before. One finds how Christian names came into a family, with a world of other delectable erudition. You cannot imagine how vexed I was that Bloomfield died before he arrived at Houghton — I had promised myself a whole crop of notable ancestors — but I think I have pretty well unkennelled them myself.

Adieu! dear sir,

Yours ever.

P. S. I found a family of Whaplode in Lincolnshire who give our arms, and have persuaded myself that Whaplode is a corruption of Walpole, and came from a branch when we lived at Walpole in Lincolnshire.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, July 9, 1775.

THE whole business of this letter would lie in half a line. Shall you have room for me on Tuesday the 18th? I am putting myself into motion that I may go farther. I told madame du Deffand how you had scolded me on her account, and she has charged me to thank you, and tell you how much she wishes to see you too. I would give any thing

to go——But the going!——However, I really think I shall—but I grow terribly affected with a *maladie de famille*, that of taking root at home.

I did but put my head into London on Thursday, and more bad news from America. I wonder when it will be bad enough to make folks think it so, without going on! The stocks indeed begin to grow a little nervous, and they are apt to affect other pulses. I heard this evening here that the Spanish fleet is sailed, and that we are not in the secret whither—but I don't answer for Twickenham gazettes, and I have no better. I have a great mind to tell you a Twickenham story; and yet it will be good for nothing, as I cannot send you the accent in a letter. Here it is; and you must try to set it to the right emphasis. One of our maccaronis is dead, a captain M * * * *, the tea-man's son. He had quitted the army, because his comrades called him captain Hyson, and applied himself to learn the classics and free-thinking; and was always disputing with the parson of the parish about Dido and his own soul. He married miss Paulin's warehouse, who had six hundred a year; but, being very much out of conceit with his own canister, could not reconcile himself to her riding-hood—so they parted beds in three nights. Of late he has taken to writing comedies, which every body was welcome to hear him read, as he could get nobody to act them. Mrs. M * * * has a friend, one Mrs. V * * *, a mighty plausible good

sort of body, who feels for every body, and a good deal for herself, is of a certain age, wears well, has some pretensions that she thinks very reasonable still, and a gouty husband. Well! she was talking to Mr. Raftor about captain M * * * a little before he died. "Pray, sir, does the captain ever communicate his writings to Mrs. M * * * ?"—"Oh dear, no, madam; he has a sovereign contempt for her understanding."—"Poor woman!"—"And pray, sir,—give me leave to ask you: I think I have heard that they very seldom sleep together?"—"Oh, never, madam! Don't you know all that?"—"*Poor woman!*"—I don't know whether you will laugh; but Mr. Raftor, who tells a story better than any body, made me laugh for two hours. Good night.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBURY.

From t'other side of the water, August 17, 1775.

INTERPRETING your ladyship's orders in the most personal sense, as respecting the dangers of the sea, I write the instant I am landed. I did not, in truth, set out till yesterday morning at eight o'clock; but finding the roads, horses, postillions, tides, winds, moons, and captain Fectors in the pleasantest humour in the world, I embarked almost as soon as I arrived at Dover, and reached Calais before the sun was awake;—and here I am

for the sixth time in my life, with only the trifling distance of seven-and-thirty years between my first voyage and the present. Well, I can only say in excuse, that I am got into the land of Struldbrugs, where one is never too old to be young, and where *la bequille du pere Barnabas* blossoms like Aaron's rod, or the Glastonbury thorn.

Now to be sure I shall be a little mortified, if your ladyship wanted a letter of news, and did not at all trouble your head about my navigation. However, you will not tell one so; and therefore I will persist in believing that this good news will be received with transport at Park-place, and that the bells of Henley will be set a-ringing. The rest of my adventures must be deferred till they have happened, which is not always the case of travels. I send you no compliments from Paris, because I have not got thither, nor delivered the bundle which Mr. Conway sent me. I did, as your ladyship commanded, buy three pretty little medallions in frames of filigraine, for our dear old friend.[1] They will not ruin you, having cost not a guinea and half; but it was all I could find that was genteel and portable; and as she does not measure by guineas, but attentions, she will be as much pleased as if you had sent her a dozen acres of Park-place. As they are in bas-relief, too, they are feelable, and

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[1] Madame du Deffand.

that is a material circumstance to her. Indeed I wish the Diomede had even so much as a pair of Nankin!

Adieu, toute la chere famille! I think of October with much satisfaction; it will double the pleasure of my return.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBURY.

Paris, August 20, 1775.

I HAVE been sea-sick to death; I have been poisoned by dirt and vermin; I have been stifled by heat, choked by dust, and starved for want of any thing I could touch: and yet, madam, here I am perfectly well, not in the least fatigued; and, thanks to the rivelled parchments, formerly faces, which I have seen by hundreds, I find myself almost as young as when I came hither first in the last century. In spite of my whims, and delicacy, and laziness, none of my grievances have been mortal: I have borne them as well as if I set up for a philosopher, like the sages of this town. Indeed I have found my dear old woman so well, and looking so much better than she did four years ago, that I am transported with pleasure, and thank your ladyship and Mr. Conway for driving me hither. Madame du Deffand came to me the instant I arrived, and sat by me whilst I stripped and

dressed myself; for, as she said, since she cannot see, there was no harm in my being stark. She was charmed with your present, but was so kind as to be so much more charmed with my arrival, that she did not think of it a moment. I sat with her till half an hour after two in the morning, and had a letter from her before my eyes were open again. In short, her soul is immortal, and forces her body to bear it company.

This is the very eve of madame Clotilde's wedding; but monsieur Turgot, to the great grief of lady M * * * *, will suffer no cost, but one banquet, one ball, and a play at Versailles. Count Viri gives a banquet, a *bal masque*, and a firework. I think I shall see little but the last, from which I will send your ladyship a rocket in my next letter. Lady M * * * *, I believe, has had a private audience of the embasssador's leg, but *en tout bien et honneur*, and only to satisfy her ceremonious curiosity about any part of royal nudity. I am just going to her, as she is to Versailles; and I have not time to add a word more to the vows of your ladyship's

Most faithful.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Paris, Sept. 8, 1775.

THE delays of the post, and its departure before its arrival, saved me some days of anxiety for lady Ailesbury, and prevented my telling you how concerned I am for her accident; though I trust by this time she has not even pain left. I feel the horror you must have felt during her suffering in the dark, and on the sight of her arm;[1] and though nobody admires her needle-work more than I, still I am rejoiced that it will be the greatest sufferer—However, I am very impatient for a farther account. Madame du Deffand, who you know never loves her friends by halves, and whose impatience never allows itself time to inform itself, was out of her wits because I could not explain exactly how the accident happened, and where. She wanted to write directly, though the post was just gone; and as soon as I could make her easy about the accident, she fell into a new distress about her fans for madame de Marchais, and concludes they have been overturned and broken too. In short, I never saw any think like her—She has made engagements for me till Monday se'nnight; in which are included I

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[1] Lady Ailesbury had been overturned in her carriage at Park-place, and dislocated her wrist.

don't know how many journeys into the country; and as nobody ever leaves her without her engaging them for another time, all these parties will be so many polypuses, that will shoot out into new ones every way. Madame de Jonsac, a great friend of mine, arrived the day before yesterday, and madame du Deffand has pinned her down to meeting me at her house four times before next Tuesday, all parentheses, that are not to interfere with our other suppers; and from those suppers I never get to bed before two or three o'clock. In short, I need have the activity of a squirrel, and the strength of a Hercules, to go through my labours —not to count how many *demêlés* I have had to *raccommode*, and how many *memoires* to present against Tonton,[1] who grows the greater favourite the more people he devours. As I am the only person who dare correct him, I have already insisted on his being confined in the Bastile every day after five o'clock. T'other night he flew at lady Barrymore's face, and I thought would have torn her eye out; but it ended in biting her finger. She was terrified; she fell into tears. Madame du Deffand, who has too much parts not to see every thing in its true light, perceiving that she had not beaten Tonton half enough, immediately told us a story of a lady, whose dog having bitten

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[1] A favourite dog of madame du Deffand's.

a piece out of a gentleman's leg, the tender dame, in a great fright, cried out, "Won't it make my dog sick?"

Lady Barrymore has taken a house. She will be glutted with conquests: I never saw any body so much admired. I doubt her poor little head will be quite overset.

Madame de Marchais is charming: eloquence and attention itself. I cannot stir for peaches, nectarines, grapes, and bury pears. You would think Pomona was in love with me. I am not so transported with N * * * *. cock and hen. They are a tabor and pipe that I do not understand. He mouths and she squeaks, and neither articulates. M. d'Entragues I have not seen. Upon the whole, I am much more pleased with Paris than ever I was; and, perhaps, shall stay a little longer than I intended. The Harry Grenvilles[3] are arrived. I dined with them at madame de Viry's[4], who has completed the conquest of France by her behaviour on madame Clotilde's wedding, and by the fêtes she gave. Of other English I wot not, but grieve the Richmonds do not come.

I am charmed with doctor Bally; nay, and with

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[3] Henry Grenville, brother to the first earl Temple. He married miss Margaret Banks.

[4] Miss Harriet Speed. She had married M. le comte de Viry when he was minister at London from the court of Turin. She is one of the ladies to whom Gray's long story is addressed.

the king of Prussia—as much as I can be with a northern monarch. For your Kragen, I think we ought to procure a female one, and marry it to Ireland, that we may breed some new islands against we have lost America. I know nothing of said America. There is not a Frenchman that does not think us distracted.

I used to scold you about your bad writing, and perceive I have written in such a hurry, and blotted my letter so much, that you will not be able to read it: but consider how few moments I have to myself. I am forced to stuff my ears with cotton to get any sleep.—However, my journey has done me good. I have thrown off at least fifteen years. Here is a letter for my dear Mrs. D * * * * from madame de * * * *, who thinks she dotes on you all. Adieu!

P. S. I shall bring you two eloges of marshal Catinat, not because I admire them, but because I admire him, because I think him very like you.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Paris, Oct. 6, 1775.

It will look like a month since I wrote to you; but I have been coming, and am. Madame du Deffand has been so ill, that the day she was seized I thought she would not live till night.

Her Herculean weakness, which could not resist strawberries and cream after supper, has surmounted all the *ups* and *downs* which followed her excess; but her impatience to go every where and do every thing has been attended with a kind of relapse, and another kind of giddiness: so that I am not quite easy about her, as they allow her to take no nourishment to recruit, and she will die of inanition, if she does not live upon it. She cannot lift her head from the pillow without *étourdissemens;* and yet her spirits gallop faster than any body's, and so do her repartees. She has a great supper to-night for the duc de Choiseul, and was in such a passion yesterday with her cook about it, and that put Tonton into such a rage, that *nos dames de saint Joseph* thought the devil or the philosophers were flying away with their convent! As I have scarce quitted her, I can have had nothing to tell you. If she gets well, as I trust, I shall set out on the 12th; but I cannot leave her in any danger—though I shall run many myself, if I stay longer. I have kept such bad hours with this *malade,* that I have had alarms of gout; and bad weather, worse inns, and a voyage in winter, will ill suit me. The fans arrived at a propitious moment, and she immediately had them opened on her bed, and felt all the patterns, and had all the papers described. She was all satisfaction and thanks, and swore me to do her full justice to lady Ailesbury and Mrs.

Damer. Lord Harrington and lady Harriet are arrived; but have annpunced and persisted in a strict invisibility.

I know nothing of my *chere patrie*, but what I learn from the London Chronicle; and that tells me, that the trading towns are suing out *lettres de noblesse;* that is, entreating the king to put an end to commerce, that they may all be gentlemen. Here agriculture, economy, reformation, philosophy, are the bon-ton even at court. The two nations seem to have crossed over and figured in; but as people that copy take the bad with the good, as well as the good with the bad, there was two days ago a great horse-race in the plain de Sablon, between the comte d'Artois, the duc de Chartres, monsieur de Conflans, and the duc de Lauzun. The latter won by the address of a little English postillion, who is in such fashion, that I don't know whether the Academy will not give him for the subject of an *eloge*.

The duc de Choiseul, I said, is here; and as he has a second time put off his departure, *cela fait beaucoup de bruit.* I shall not be at all surprised if he resumes the reins, as (forgive me a pun) he has the *Reine* already. Messrs. de Turgot and Malesherbes certainly totter—but I shall tell you no more till I see you; for, though this goes by a private hand, it is so private, that I don't know it, being an English merchant's, who lodges in this hotel, and whom I do not know by sight: so per-

haps I may bring you word of this letter myself. I flatter myself lady Ailesbury's arm has recovered its straightness and its cunning.

Madame du Deffand says I love you better than any thing in the world. If true, I hope you have not less penetration: if you have not, or it is not true, what would professions avail?—So I leave that matter in suspense. Adieu!

October 7.

MADAME du Deffand was quite well yesterday; and at near one this morning I left the duc de Choiseul, the duchess de Grammont, the prince and princess of Beauveau, princess of Poix, the marechale de Luxembourg, duchess de Lauzun, ducs de Gontaut et de Chabot, and Caraccioli, round her chaise *longue;* and she herself was not a dumb personage. I have not heard yet how she has slept, and must send away my letter this moment, as I must dress to go to dinner with monsieur de Malesherbes at madame de Villegagnon's. I must repose a great while after all this living in company; nay, intend to go very little into the world again, as I do not admire the French way of burning one's candle to the very snuff in public. Tell Mrs. Damer, that the fashion now is to erect the *toupée* into a high detached tuft of hair, like a cockatoo's crest; and this *toupée* they call *la physionomie*—I don't guess why.

My *laquais* is come back from St. Joseph's, and

says Marie de Vichy[1] has had a very good night and is quite well.—Philip,[2] let my chaise be ready on Thursday.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Dec. 10, 1775.

I was very sorry to have been here, dear sir, the day you called on me in town. It is so difficult to uncloister you, that I regret not seeing you when you are out of your own *ambry*.

I have nothing new to tell you that is very old; but you can inform me of something within your own district. Who is the author, E. B. G. of a version of Mr. Gray's Latin Odes into English,[3] and of an Elegy on my wolf-devoured dog, poor Tory? a name you will marvel at in a dog of mine; but his godmother was the widow of alderman Parsons, who gave him at Paris to lord Conway, and he to me. The author is a poet, but makes me blush, for he calls Mr. Gray and me *congenial pair*. Alas! I have no genius; and if any symptom of talent, so inferior to Gray's, that

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[1] The maiden name of madame du Deffand.

[2] Mr. Walpole's valet de chambre.

[3] Edward Burnaby Green, formerly of Bennet-college, but at that time a brewer in Westminster.

Milton and Quarles might as well be coupled together. We rode over the Alps in the same chaise, but Pegasus drew on his side, and a cart-horse on mine. I am too jealous of his fame to let us be coupled together.

This author says he has lately printed at Cambridge a Latin translation of the Bards; I should be much obliged to you for it.

I do not ask you if Cambridge has produced any thing, for it never does. Have you made any discoveries? Has Mr. Lort? Where is he? Does Mr. Tyson engrave no more?

My plates for Strawberry advance leisurely. I am about nothing. I grow old and lazy, and the present world cares for nothing but politics, and satisfies itself with writing in newspapers. If they are not bound up and preserved in libraries, posterity will imagine that the art of printing was gone out of use. Lord Hardwicke has indeed reprinted his heavy volume of Sir Dudley Carleton's Dispatches, and says I was in the wrong to despise it. I never met with any body that thought otherwise. What signifies raising the dead so often, when they die the next minute? Adieu!

Yours ever.

To the COUNTESS of AILESBURY.

Arlington-street, Dec. 12, 1775.

Did you hear that scream?—Don't be frightened, madam; it was only the duchess of Kingston last Sunday was sevennight at chapel: but it is better to be prepared; for she has sent word to the house of lords, that her nerves are so bad she intends to scream for these two months, and therefore they must put off her trial. They are to take her throes into consideration to-day; and, that there may be sufficient room for the length of her veil and train, and attendants, have a mind to treat her with Westminster-hall. I hope so, for I should like to see this *comedie larmoyante;* and besides, I conclude, it would bring your ladyship to town. You shall have timely notice.

There is another comedy infinitely worth seeing, monsieur le Tessier. He is Preville, and Caillaud, and Garrick, and Weston, and Mrs. Clive, all together; and as perfect in the most insignificant part as in the most difficult. To be sure, it is hard to give up loo in such fine weather, when one can play from morning till night. In London, Pam can scarce get a house till ten o'clock. If you happen to see the general your husband, make my compliments to him, madam: his friend the king of Prussia is going to the devil and Alexander the Great.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, Dec. 14th, 1775.

Our letters probably passed by each other on the road, for I wrote to you on Tuesday, and have this instant received one from you, which I answer directly, to beg pardon for my incivility, nay, ingratitude, in not thanking you for your present of a whole branch of most respectable ancestors, the *Derehaughs* — why, the *Derehaughs* alone would make gentlemen of half the modern peers English or Irish. I doubt my journey to France was got into my head, and left no room for an additional quarter — but I have given it to Edmondson, and ordered him to take care that I am born again from the *Derehaughs*. This Edmondson has got a ridiculous notion into his head that another, and much ancienter of my progenitors, sir Henry Walpole, married his wife Isabella Fitz-Osbert, when she was widow to Sir Walter Jernegan; whereas all the *Old Testament* says sir Walter married sir Henry's widow. Pray send me your authority to confound this gainsayer, if you know any thing particular of the matter.

I had not heard of the painting you tell me of. As those boobies, the Society of Antiquaries, have gotten hold of it, I wonder their *piety* did not make them bury it again, as they did the clothes of Edward I. I have some notion that in Vertue's

MSS. or somewhere else, I don't know where, I have read of some ancient painting at the Rose Tavern. This I will tell *you* — but Mr. Gough is such a bear, that I shall not satisfy him about it. That society, when they are puzzled, have recourse to me; and that would be so often, that I shall not encourage them. They may blunder as much as they please, from their heavy president down to the pert governor Pownall, who accounts for every thing immediately, before the creation or since. Say only to Mr. Gough, that I said I had not leisure now to examine Vertue's MSS. If I find any thing there, *you* shall know — but I have no longer any eagerness to communicate what I discover. When there was so little taste for MSS. which Mr. Gray thought worth transcribing, and which were so valuable, would one offer more pearls?

Boydel brought me this morning another number of the Prints from the pictures at Houghton. Two or three in particular are most admirably executed — but alas! it will be twenty years before the set is completed. That is too long to look forward at any age! — and at mine! — Nay, people will be tired in a quarter of the time. Boydel, who knows this country, and still more this town, thinks so too. Perhaps there will be newer, or at least more fashionable ways of engraving, and the old will be despised — or, which is still more likely, nobody will be able to afford the expense. Who

would lay a plan for any thing in an overgrown metropolis hurrying to its fall?

I will return you Mr. Gough's letter when I get a frank. Adieu.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Jan. 26, 1776.

I HAVE deferred answering your last letter, dear sir, till I cannot answer with my own hand. I made a pilgrimage at Christmas to Queen's Cross, at Ampthill, was caught there by the snow, imprisoned there for a fortnight, and sent home bound hand and foot by the gout. The pain, I suppose, is quite frozen, for I have had none; nothing but inflammation and swelling, and they abate. In reality, this is owing to the bootikins, which, though they do not cure the gout, take out its sting. You, who are still more apt to be an invalid, feel, I fear, this Hyperborean season; I should be glad to hear you did not.

I thought I had at once jumped upon a discovery of the object of the painted room at the Rose Tavern, but shall not plume myself upon my luck till I have seen the chamber, because Mr. Gough's account seems to date the style of the painting earlier than will serve my hypothesis. I had no data to go upon but the scite having belonged to

the family of Tufton (for I do not think the description at all answers to the taking of Francis I. nor is it at all credible that there should be arms in the painting, and yet neither those of France or Austria). I turned immediately to lord Thanet's pedigree, in Collins's peerage, and found at once an heroic adventure performed by one of the family, that accords remarkably with the principal circumstance. It is the rescue of the elector Palatine, son of our queen of Bohemia, from an ambuscade laid for him by the duke of Lorrain. The arms, Or and Gules, I thought were those of Lorrain, which I since find are Argent and Gules. The Argent indeed may be turned yellow by age, as Mr. Gough says he does not know whether the crescent is red or black. But the great impediment is, that this achievement of a Tufton was performed in the reign of Charles II. Now in that reign, when we were become singularly ignorant of chivalry, anachronisms and blunders might easily be committed by a modern painter, yet I shall not adhere to my discovery, unless I find the painting correspond with the style of the modern time to which I would assign it; nor will I see through the eyes of my hypothesis but fairly. I shall now turn to another subject. Mr. Astle, who has left me off ever since the fatal era of Richard III. for no reason that I can conceive but my having adopted his discovery, which for

aught I know may be a reason with an antiquary, lately sent me the attainder of George duke of Clarence, which he has found in the Tower and printed; and on it, as rather glad to confute me and himself, than to have found a curiosity, he had written two or three questions which tended to accuse Richard of having forged the instrument, though to the instrument itself is added another, which confirms my acquittal of Richard of the murder of Clarence — but, alas! Passion is a spying-glass that does but make the eyes of Folly more blind. I sent him an answer, a copy of which I enclose.[1] Since that, I have heard no

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[1] TO THOMAS ASTLE, ESQ.*

Dec. 19th, 1775.

SIR,

I AM much obliged, and return you my thanks for the paper you have sent me. You have added a question to it, which, if I understand it, you yourself, sir, are more capable than any body of answering. You say, "Is it probable that this instrument was framed by Richard duke of Gloucester?" If by *framed* you mean drawn up, I should think princes of the blood in that barbarous age, were not very expert in drawing acts of attainder, though a branch of the law more in use then than since. But as I suppose you mean *forged*, you, sir, so conversant in writings of that age, can judge better than any man. You may only mean *forged by his order*. Your reading, much deeper than mine, may furnish you with precedents of *forged Acts of Attainder*; I never heard of one; nor does my simple understanding

more of him, nor shall, I suppose, till I see this new proof of Richard's guilt adopted into the an-

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suggest the use of such a forgery, on cases immediately pressing; because an act of attainder being a matter of public notoriety, it would be revolting to the common sense of all mankind to plead such an one, if it had not really existed. If it could be carried into execution by force, the force would avail without the forgery, and would be at once exaggerated and weakened by it. I cannot therefore conceive why Richard should make use of so absurd a trick, unless that having so little to do in so short and turbulent a reign, he amused himself with treasuring up in the Tower a forged act for the satisfaction of those who three hundred years afterwards should be glad of discovering new flaws in his character. As there are men so bigotted to old legends, I am persuaded, sir, that you would please them by communicating your question to them. They would rejoice to suppose that Richard was more criminal than even the Lancastrian historians represent him; and just at this moment I don't know whether they would not believe that Mrs. Rudd assisted him. I, who am probably as absurd a bigot on the other side, see nothing in the paper you have sent me, but a confirmation of Richard's innocence of the death of Clarence. As the duke of Buckingham was appointed to superintend the execution, it is incredible that he should have been drowned in a butt of malmsey, and that Richard should have been the executioner. When a senechal of England, or, as we call it, a lord high steward, is appointed for a trial, at least for execution, with all his officers, it looks very much as if, even in that age, proceedings were carried on with a little more formality than the careless writers of that time let us think. The appointment too of the duke of Buckingham for that office, seems to add another improbability [and a work of supererogation] to Richard's forging the instrument. Did Richard really do nothing but what tended to increase his

nals of the Society, against which I have reserved some other stigmas for it.

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unpopularity by glutting mankind with lies, forgeries, and absurdities, which every man living could detect?

I take this opportunity, sir, of telling you how sorry I am not to have seen you long, and how glad I shall be to renew our acquaintance, especially if you like to talk over this old story with me, though I own it is of little importance, and pretty well exhausted.

I am, sir, with great regard,
Your obliged humble servant.

[*Queries to be added to this letter.*]

If there was no such parliament held, would Richard have dared to forge an act for it?

Would Henry VII. never have reproached him with so absurd a forgery?

Did neither sir T. More nor lord Bacon ever hear of that forgery?

As Richard declared his nephew the Earl of Warwick his successor, would he have done so, if he had forged an act of attainder of Warwick's father?

If it is supposed he forged the act, when he set aside Warwick, could he pretend that act was not known, when he declared him his heir? Would not so recent an act's being unknown, have proved it a forgery? and if there had been no such parliament as that which forged it, would not that have proved it a double forgery? The act, therefore, and the parliament that passed it, must have been genuine and existed, though no other record appears. The distractions of the times, the evident insufficiency or partiality of the historians of that age, and the interest of Henry VII. to destroy all records that gave authority to the house of York and their title, account for our wanting evidence of that parliament.

Mr. Edmondson has found a confirmation of Isabella Fitzosbert having married Jernegan after Walpole. I forget where I found my arms of Fitzosberts. Though they differ from yours of sir Roger, the colours are the same, and they agree with yours of William Fitzosborne. There was no accuracy in spelling names even till much later ages; and you know that different branches of the same family made little variation in their coats.

I am very sorry for the death of poor Henshaw, of which I had not heard.

I am yours most sincerely.

P. S. The queries added to the letter to Mr. Astle were not sent with it, and as I reserve them for a future answer, I beg you will shew them to nobody.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, March 1, 1776.

I am sorry to tell you that the curious old painting at the Tavern in Fleet-street is addled, by the subject turning out a little too old. Alas! it is not the story of Francis I. but of St. Paul. All the coats of arms that should have been French and Austrian, and that I had a mind to convert into Palatine and Lorrain, are the bearings of Pharisaic

nobility. In short, Dr. Percy was here yesterday, and tells me that over Mr. Gough's imaginary Pavia is written *Damascus* in capital letters. Oh! our antiquaries!

Mr. Astle has at last called on me, but I was not well enough to see him. I shall return his visit when I can go out. I hope this will be in a week: I have no pain left, but have a codicil of nervous fevers, for which I am taking the bark. I have nothing new for you in our old way, and therefore will not unnecessarily lengthen my letter, which was only intended to cashier the old painting, though I hear the antiquaries still go on with having a drawing taken from it—Oh! our antiquaries!

To Dr. GEM.[1]

Arlington-street, April 4, 1776.

It is but fair, when one quits one's party, to give notice to those one abandons—at least, modern patriots, who often imbibe their principles of honour at Newmarket, use that civility. You and

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[1] An English physician long settled at Paris, no less esteemed for his professional knowledge, than for his kind attention to the poor who applied to him for medical assistance.

I, dear sir, have often agreed in our political notions; and you, I fear, will die without changing your opinion. For my part, I must confess I am totally altered; and, instead of being a warm partisan of liberty, now admire nothing but despotism. You will naturally ask what place I have gotten, or what bribe I have taken? Those are the criterions of political changes in England —but as my conversion is of foreign extraction, I shall not be the richer for it. In one word, it is the *relation du lit de justice*[2] that has operated the miracle. When two ministers[3] are found so humane, so virtuous, so excellent, as to study nothing but the welfare and deliverance of the people; when a king listens to such excellent men; and when a parliament, from the basest, most interested motives, interposes to intercept the blessing, must I not change my opinions, and admire arbitrary power? or can I retain my sentiments, without varying the object?

Yes, sir, I am shocked at the conduct of the parliament — one would think it was an English one! I am scandalised at the speeches of the *avocat general*,[4] who sets up the odious interests of the nobility and clergy against the cries and

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[2] The first *lit de justice* held by Louis XVI.

[3] Messrs. de Malesherbes and Turgot.

[4] Monsieur de Seguier.

groans of the poor, and who employs his wicked eloquence to tempt the good young monarch, by personal views, to sacrifice the mass of his subjects to the privileges of the few — But why do I call it eloquence? The fumes of interest had so clouded his rhetoric, that he falls into a downright Iricism. — He tells the king, that the intended tax on the proprietors of land will affect the property not only of the rich, but of the poor. I should be glad to know what is the property of the poor? Have the poor landed estates? Are those who have landed estates the poor? Are the poor that will suffer by the tax, the wretched labourers who are dragged from their famishing families to work on the roads? — But *it is* wicked eloquence when it finds a reason, or gives a reason for continuing the abuse. — The advocate tells the king, those abuses are *presque consacrés par l'ancienneté.* — Indeed he says all that can be said for nobility, it is *consacrée par l'ancienneté* — and thus the length of the pedigree of abuses renders them respectable!

His arguments are as contemptible when he tries to dazzle the king by the great names of Henry quatre and Sulley, of Louis XIV. and Colbert, two couple whom nothing but a mercenary orator would have classed together. Nor, were all four equally venerable, would it prove any thing. Even good kings and good ministers, if such have been, may have erred; nay, may

have done the best they could. They would not have been good, if they wished their errors should be preserved, the longer they had lasted.

In short, sir, I think this resistance of the parliament to the adorable reformation planned by Messrs. de Turgot and Malesherbes, is more phlegmatically scandalous than the wildest tyranny of despotism. I forget what the nation was that refused liberty when it was offered. This opposition to so noble a work is worse. A whole people may refuse its own happiness; but these profligate magistrates resist happiness for others, for millions, for posterity! — Nay, do they not half vindicate Maupeou, who crushed them? — And you, dear sir, will you now chide my apostacy? Have I not cleared myself to your eyes? I do not see a shadow of sound logic in all monsieur Seguier's speeches, but in his proposing that the soldiers should work on the roads, and that passengers should contribute to their fabric; though, as France is not so luxuriously mad as England, I do not believe passengers could support the expence of the roads. That argument, therefore, is like another that the avocat proposes to the king, and which, he modestly owns, he believes would be impracticable.

I beg your pardon, sir, for giving you this long trouble; but I could not help venting myself, when shocked to find such renegade conduct in a parliament that I was rejoiced had been restored.

Poor human kind! is it always to breed serpents from its own bowels? In one country it chooses its representatives, and they sell it and themselves — in others it exalts despots — in another it resists the despot when he consults the good of his people! —— Can we wonder mankind is wretched, when men are such beings? Parliaments run wild with loyalty, when America is to be enslaved or butchered. They rebel, when their country is to be set free! — I am not surprised at the idea of the devil being always at our elbows. They who invented him, no doubt could not conceive how men could be so atrocious to one another, without the intervention of a fiend. Don't you think, if he had never been heard of before, that he would have been invented on the late partition of Poland! Adieu, dear sir!

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

April 16th, 1776.

YOU will be concerned, my good sir, for what I have this minute heard from his nephew, that poor Mr. Granger was seized at the communion table on Sunday with an apoplexy, and died yesterday morning at five. I have answered the letter with a word of advice about his MSS. that they may

not fall into the hands of booksellers. He had been told by idle people so many gossiping stories, that it would hurt him and living persons, if all his collections were to be printed; for as he was incapable of telling an untruth himself, he suspected nobody else — too great goodness in a biographer.

Yours ever.

P. S. The whole world is occupied with the duchess of Kingston's trial. I don't tell you a word of it, for you will not care about it these two hundred years.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 1, 1776.

MR. GRANGER'S papers have been purchased by lord Mount Stewart, who has the portrait of frenzy as well as I; and though I am the head of the sect, I have no longer the rage of propagating it, nor would I on any account take the trouble of revising and publishing the MSS. Mr. Granger had drowned his taste for portraits in the ocean of biography; and though he began with elucidating prints, he at last only sought prints that he might write the lives of those they represented. His work was grown and growing so

voluminous that an abridgement only could have made it useful to collectors. I am not surprised that you will not assist Dr. Kippis: bishop Laud and William Prynne could never agree. You are very justly more averse to Mr. Masters, who is a pragmatic fellow, and at best troublesome.

If the agate knives you are so good as to recommend to me can be tolerably authenticated, have any royal marks, or at least, old setting of the time, and will be sold for two guineas, I should not dislike having them: though I have scarce room to stick a knife and fork. But if I trouble you to pay for them, you must let me know all I owe you already, for I know I am in your debt for prints and pamphlets, and this new debt will make the whole considerable enough to be remitted. I have lately purchased three apostle-spoons to add to the one you was so kind as to give me. What is become of Mr. Essex? does he never visit London? I wish I could tempt him thither or hither. I am not only thinking of building my offices in a collegiate style, for which I have a good design and wish to consult him, but I am actually wanting assistance at this very moment, about a smaller gallery that I wish to add this summer; and which, if Mr. Essex was here, he should build directly.

It is scarce worth asking him to take the journey on purpose, though I would pay for his journey hither and back, and would lodge him

here for the necessary time. I can only beg you to mention it to him as an idle jaunt, the object is so trifling. I wish more that you could come with him: do you leave your poor parishioners and their souls to themselves? if you do, I hope Dr. Kippis will seduce them.

Adieu, dear sir,

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 11th, 1776.

I am grieved and feel for your gout; I know the vexations and disappointments it occasions, and how often it will return when one thinks it going or gone: it represents life and its vicissitudes. At last I know it makes me content when one does not feel actual pain,—and, what contents, may be called a blessing: but it is that sort of blessing that extinguishes hopes and views, and is not so luxurious but one can bear to relinquish it. I seek amusements now to amuse me; I used to rush into them, because I had an impulse and wished for what I sought. My want of Mr. Essex has a little of both kinds, as it is for an addition to this place, for which my fondness is not worn out. I shall be very glad to see him here either on the

20th or 21st of this month, and shall have no engagement till the 23d, and will gladly pay his journey. I am sorry I must not hope that you will accompany him.

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 30, 1776.

I WAS very glad to receive your letter, not only because always most glad to hear of you, but because I wished to write to you, and had absolutely nothing to say till I had something to answer. I have lain but two nights in town since I saw you, have been else constantly here, very much employed, though doing, hearing, knowing exactly nothing. I have had a Gothic architect from Cambridge to design me a gallery, which will end in a mouse, that is, in an hexagon closet of seven feet diameter. I have been making a beauty-room, which was effected by buying two dozen of small copies of sir Peter Lely, and hanging them up; and I have been making hay, which is not made, because I put it off for three days, as I chose it should adorn the landscape when I was to have company; and so the rain is come, and has drowned it. — However, as I can even turn calculator when it is to comfort me for not

minding my interest, I have discovered that it is five to one better for me that my hay should be spoiled than not; for, as the cows will eat it if it is damaged, which horses will not, and as I have five cows and but one horse, is not it plain that the worse my hay is, the better? Do not you with your refining head go, and, out of excessive friendship, find out something to destroy my system. I had rather be a philosopher than a rich man; and yet have so little philosophy, that I had much rather be content than be in the right.

Mr. * * * and lady * * * have been here four or five days — so I had both content and exercise for my philosophy. I wish lady * * * was as fortunate! The Pembrokes, Churchills, Le Texier, as you will have heard, and the Garricks, have been with us. Perhaps, if alone, I might have come to you—but you are all too healthy and harmonious. I can neither walk nor sing — nor, indeed, am fit for any thing but to amuse myself in a sedentary trifling way. What I have most certainly not been doing, is writing any thing: a truth I say to you, but do not desire you to repeat. I deign to satisfy scarce any body else. Whoever reported that I was writing any thing, must have been so totally unfounded, that they either blundered by guessing without reason, or knew they lied — and that could not be with any kind intention; though

saying I am going to do what I am not going to do, is wretched enough. Whatever is said of me without truth, any body is welcome to believe that pleases. In fact, though I have scarce a settled purpose about any thing, I think I shall never write any more. I have written a great deal too much, unless I had written better, and I know I should now only write still worse. One's talent, whatever it is, does not improve at near sixty — yet, if I liked it, I dare to say a good reason would not stop my inclination: — but I am grown most indolent in that respect, and most absolutely indifferent to every purpose of vanity. Yet without vanity I am become still prouder and more contemptuous. I have a contempt for my countrymen that makes me despise their approbation. The applause of slaves and of the foolish mad is below ambition. Mine is the haughtiness of an ancient Briton, that cannot write what would please this age, and would not if he could. Whatever happens in America, this country is undone. I desire to be reckoned of the last age, and to be thought to have lived to be superannuated, preserving my senses only for myself and for the few I value. I cannot aspire to be traduced like Algernon Sydney, and content myself with sacrificing to him amongst my lares. Unalterable in my principles, careless about most things below essentials, indulging myself in trifles by system,

annihilating myself by choice, but dreading folly at an unseemly age, I contrive to pass my time agreeably enough, yet see its termination approach without anxiety. This is a true picture of my mind; and it must be true, because drawn for you, whom I would not deceive, and could not if I would. Your question on my being writing drew it forth, though with more seriousness than the report deserved — yet talking to one's dearest friend is neither wrong nor out of season. Nay, you are my best apology.. I have always contented myself with your being perfect, or, if your modesty demands a mitigated term, I will say, unexceptionable. It is comical, to be sure, to have always been more solicitous about the virtue of one's friend than about one's own — yet I repeat it, you are my apology — though I never was so unreasonable as to make you answerable for my faults in return: I take them wholly to myself——But enough of this. When I know my own mind, for hitherto I have settled no plan for my summer, I will come to you. Adieu!

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

July 23d, 1776.

You are so good to me, my dear sir, that I am quite ashamed. I must not send back your

charming present, but wish you would give me leave to pay for it, and I shall have the same obligation to you and still more. It is beautiful in form and colours, and pleases me excessively. In the mean time I have in a great hurry (for I came home but at noon to meet Mr. Essex), chosen out a few prints for you, such as I think you will like, and beg you to accept them: they enter into no one of my sets.

I am heartily grieved at your account of yourself, and know no comfort but submission. I was absent to see general Conway, who is far from well. We must take our lot as it falls! joy and sorrow is mixed till the scene closes. I am out of spirits, and shall not mend yours. Mr Essex is just setting out, and I write in great haste, but am, as I have so long been,

Most truly yours.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 24th, 1776.

I WROTE to you yesterday, dear sir, not only in great haste, but in great confusion, and did not say half I ought to have done for the pretty vase you sent me and for your constant obliging attention to me. All I can say is, that gratitude attempted even in my haste and concern to put

in its word: and I did not mean to pay you (which I hope you will really allow me to do) but to express my sensibility of your kindness. The fact was, that to avoid disappointing Mr. Essex, when I had dragged him hither from Cambridge, I had returned hither precipitately, and yet late from Park-place, whither I went the day before to see general Conway, who has had a little attack of the paralytic kind. You who can remember how very long and dearly I have loved so near a relation and particular friend, and who are full of nothing but friendly sensations, can judge how shocked I was to find him more changed than I expected. I suffered so much in constraining and commanding myself, that I was not sorry, as the house was full of relations, to have the plea of Mr. Essex, to get away, and came to sigh here by myself. It is, perhaps, to vent my concern that I write now. Mr. Conway is in no manner of danger, is better, his head nor speech are affected, and the physicians, who barely allow the attack to be of the paralytic nature, are clear it is local, in the muscles of the face. Still has it operated such a revolution in my mind, as no time, *at my age*, can efface. It has at once damped every pursuit which my spirits had even now prevented me from being weaned from, I mean a *Virtù*—. It is like a mortal distemper in myself; for can amusements amuse, if there is but a glimpse, a vision, of out-living one's friends? I have had

dreams in which I thought I wished for fame—it was not certainly posthumous fame at any distance: I feel, I feel it was confined to the memory of those I love. It seems to me impossible for a man who has no friends to do any thing for fame —and to me the first position in friendship is, to intend one's friends should survive one—but it is not reasonable to oppress you, who are suffering gout, with my melancholy ideas. Let me know as you mend. What I have said will tell you, what I hope so many years have told you, that I am very constant and sincere to friends of above forty years. I doubt Mr. Essex perceived that my mind was greatly bewildered. He gave me a direction to Mr. Penticross, who I recollect Mr. Gray, not you, told me was turned a methodist teacher. He was a blue-coat boy, and came hither then to some of my servants, having at that age a poetic turn. As he has reverted to it, I hope the enthusiasm will take a more agreeable plea. I have not heard of him for many years, and thought he was settled somewhere near Cambridge: I find it is at Wallingford. I wonder those madmen and knaves do not begin to wear out, as their folly is no longer new, and as knavery can turn its hand to any trade according to the humour of the age, which in countries like this is seldom constant.

Yours most faithfully.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Thursday, 31.

Thank you for your letter. I send this by the coach. You will have found a new scene [1] — not an unexpected one by you and me, though I do not pretend I thought it so near. I rather imagined France would have instigated or winked at Spain's beginning with us. Here is a solution of the Americans declaring themselves independent. Oh! the folly, the madness, the guilt of having plunged us into this abyss! Were we and a few more endued with any uncommon penetration? — No — They who did not see as far, *would* not. I am impatient to hear the complexion of to-day. I suppose it will on the part of administration have been a wretched farce of fear daubed over with airs of bullying. You, I do not doubt, have acted like yourself, feeling for our situation, above insulting, and unprovoked but at the criminality that has brought us to this pass. Pursue your own path, nor lean to the court that may be paid to you on either side, as I am sure you will not regard their being displeased that you do not go as far as their interested views may wish.

If the court should receive any more of what

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[1] On the opening of the parliament in the year 1776.

they call good news, I think the war with France will be unavoidable. It was the victory at Long Island, and the frantic presumption it occasioned, that has ripened France's measures —— And now we are to awe them by pressing — an act that speaks our impotence! — which France did not want to learn!

I would have come to town, but I had declared so much I would not, that I thought it would look as if I came to enjoy the distress of the ministers — but I do not enjoy the distress of my country. I think we are undone — I have always thought so—whether we enslaved America or lost it totally—So we that were against the war could expect no good issue. If you do return to Park-place to-morrow, you will oblige me much by breakfasting here: you know it wastes you very little time.

I am glad I did not know of Mrs. Damer's sore throat till it is almost well. Pray take care and do not catch it.

Thank you for your care of me: I will not stay a great deal here, but at present I never was better in my life — and here I have no vexatious moments. I hate to dispute; I scorn to triumph myself, and it is very difficult to keep my temper when others do. I own I have another reason for my retirement, which is prudence. I have thought of it late, but at least I will not run into any new expence. It would cost me more than I care to

afford to buy a house in town, unless I do it to take some of my money out of the stocks, for which I tremble a little. My brother is seventy; and if I live myself, I must not build too much on his life; and you know, if he fails, I lose the most secure part of my income. I refused from lord Holland, and last year from lord North, to accept the place for my own life; and having never done a dirty thing, I will not disgrace myself at fifty-nine. I should like to live as well as I have done; but what I wish more, is to secure what I have already saved for those I would take care of after me. These are the true reasons of my dropping all thoughts of a better house in town, and of living so privately here. I will not sacrifice my health to my prudence; but my temper is so violent, that I know the tranquillity I enjoy here in solitude, is of much more benefit to my health, than the air of the country is detrimental to it. You see I can be reasonable when I have time to reflect; but philosophy has a poor chance with me when my warmth is stirred—and yet I know, that an angry old man out of parliament, and that can do nothing but be angry, is a ridiculous animal.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 19, 1776.

I have time but to write you a line, and it is as usual to beg your help in a sort of literary difficulty. I have received a letter dated ".Catherine-hall," from "Hen. Prescot," whom I doubt I have forgotten; for he begins, "Dear Sir," and I protest I cannot recollect him, though I ought. He says he wants to send me a few classical discourses, and he speaks with respect of my father, and, by his trembling hand, seems an old man. All these are reasons for my treating him with great regard; and, being afraid of hurting him, I have written a short and very civil answer, directed to the "Rev. Dr. Prescot." God knows whether he is a clergyman or a doctor, and perhaps I may have betrayed my forgetfulness; but I thought it was best to err on the over civil side. Tell me something about him; I dread his Discourses. Is he the strange man that a few years ago sent me a volume of an uncommon form, and of more uncommon matter? I suspect so.

You shall certainly have two or three of my prints by Mr. Essex when he returns hither and hence, and any thing else you will command. I am just now in great concern for the terrible death of general Conway's son-in-law, Mr. Damer, of which, perhaps, you in your solitude have not

heard.—You are happy who take no part but in the past world, for the *mortui non mordent*, nor do any of the extravagant and distressing things that perhaps they did in their lives. I hope the gout, that persecutes even in a hermitage, has left you.

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 9, 1776.

May I trouble you, dear sir, when you see our friend Mr. Essex, to tell him that the tower is covered in, and that whenever he has nothing to do, after this week, I shall be very glad to see him here, if he will only send me a line two or three days before-hand. I have carried this little tower higher than the round one, and it has an exceedingly pretty effect, breaking the long line of the house picturesquely and looking very ancient. I wish this or any thing else could tempt you hither. I must correct a little error in the spelling of a name in the pedigree you was so kind as to make out for me last year; the Derehaughs were not of Colton, but of Coulston-hall. This I discovered oddly this morning. On opening a patch-box that belonged to my mother, and which I have not opened for many years, I found

an extremely small silver collaring about this size O but broad and flat. I remember it was in an old satin bag of coins that my mother found in old Houghton when she first married. I call it a collar from the breadth; for it would not be large enough for a fairy's lap dog. It was probably made for an infant's little finger, and must have been for a ring, not a collar; for I believe, though she was an heiress, young ladies did not elope so early in those days. I never knew how it came into the family, but now it is plain, for the inscription on the outside is, "of Coulston-hall, Suff." and it is a confirmation of your pedigree. I have tied it to a piece of paper, with a long inscription, and it is so small, it will not be melted down for the weight; and if not lost from its diminutive person, may remain in the family a long while, and be preserved when some gamester may spend every other bit of silver he has in the world; at least if one would make heir looms now, one must take care that they have no value in them.

I fancy Mrs. Prescot is returned, for I have heard no more of the doctor. I wish you may be able to tell me your gout is gone.

Yours ever.

P. S. I was turning over Edmondson this evening, and observed an odd concurrence of circumstances in the present lord Carmarthen. By his

mother he is the representative of the great duke of Marlborough and of old treasurer Godolphin, by his father of the lord-treasurer duke of Leeds, and by his grandmother is descended from the lord-treasurer Oxford. Few men are so well ancestored in so short a compass of time.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 2, 1776.

THOUGH inclination, and consciousness that a man of my age, who is neither in parliament nor in business, has little to do in the world, keep me a good deal out of it, yet I will not, my dear lord, encourage you in retirement, to which for the interest of your friends you have but too much propensity. The manners of the age cannot be agreeable to those who have lived in something soberer times; nor do I think, except in France, where old people are never out of fashion, that it is reasonable to tire those whose youth and spirits may excuse some dissipation. Above all things it is my resolution never to profess retirement, lest, when I have lost all my real teeth, the imaginary one, called a colt's, should hurry me back and make me ridiculous. But one never outlives all one's contemporaries; one may assort with them. Few Englishmen, too, I have observed, can bear

solitude without being hurt by it. Our climate makes us capricious, and we must rub off our roughnesses and humours against one another. We have too an always increasing resource, which is, that though we go not to the young, they must come to us: younger usurpers tread on their heels, as they did on ours, and revenge us that have been deposed. They may retain their titles, like queen Christina, sir M * * * N * * *, and lord R * * *; but they find they have no subjects. If we could but live long enough, we should hear lord C * * *, Mr. S * * *, &c. complain of the airs and abominable hours of the youth of the age. You see, my dear lord, my easy philosophy can divert itself with any thing, even with visions; which perhaps is the best way of treating the great vision itself, life. For half one's time one should laugh *with* the world; the other half, *at* it — and then it is hard if we want amusement.

I am heartily glad, for your lordship's and lady Anne Conolly's sakes, that general Howe is safe. I sincerely interest myself for every body you are concerned for. I will say no more on a subject on which I fear I am so unlucky as to differ very much with your lordship, having always fundamentally disapproved our conduct with America. Indeed the present prospect of war with France, when we have so much disabled ourselves, and are exposed in so many quarters, is a topic for general lamentation, rather than for canvassing of

opinions, which every man must form for himself: and I doubt the moment is advancing when we shall be forced to think alike at least on the present.

I have not been yet above a night at a time in town—but shall be glad to give your lordship and lady Strafford a meeting there whenever you please.

Your most faithful humble servant.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Dec. 9, 1776.

I know you love an episcopal print, and therefore I send you one of two, that have just been given to me. As you have time and patience too, I recommend to you to peruse sir John Hawkins' History of Music. It is true there are five huge volumes in quarto, and perhaps you may not care for the expense; but surely you can borrow them in the University, and though you may no more than I, delight in the scientific, there is so much about cathedral service, and choirs, and other old matters, that I am sure you will be amused with a great deal, particularly the two last volumes, and the fac-similes of old music in the first. I doubt it is a work that will not sell rapidly, but it must have a place in all great libraries.

Pray tell Mr. Essex his ceiling is nearly finished, and very well executed.

As we have not had above two or three cold days, I hope the winter agrees with you, and that your complaints are gone off.

Adieu, dear sir,

Yours most sincerely.

To Mr. ALLAN.[1]

Strawberry-hill, Dec. 9, 1776.

Sir,

As I have not the satisfaction of being acquainted with you, I must think myself very particularly obliged by your present of the two fine and very like prints of Bishop Trevor, and beg you will be pleased to accept my sincere thanks. If you ever happen to pass this way, I shall be extremely glad to shew you the collection you have so handsomely adorned, and to have an opportunity in person of assuring you, how gratefully

I am, sir, your most obliged
and obedient humble servant.

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1 An attorney and eminent antiquary, residing at Darlington.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, Feb. 20, 1777.

Dear Sir,

You are always my oracle in any antique difficulties. I have bought at Mr. Ives's sale (immensely dear) the shutters of the altar at St. Edmondsbury: Mr. Ives had them from Tom Martin, who married Peter Leneve's widow; so you see no shutters can be better descended on the mother's side. Next to high birth, personal merit is something: in that respect my shutters are far from defective: on the contrary, the figures in the inside are so very good, as to amaze me who could paint them here in the reign of Henry VI.; they are worthy of the Bolognese school—but they have suffered in several places, though not considerably. Bowes is to repair them, under oath of only filling up the cracks, and restoring the peelings off, but without repainting or varnishing.

The possession of these boards, invaluable to me, was essential. They authenticate the sagacity of my guesses, a talent in an antiquary coequal with prophecy in a saint. On the outside is an archbishop unchristened by the late possessors, but evidently archbishop Kempe, or the same person with the prelate in my marriage of Henry VI.—and you will allow from the collateral evidence that it must be Kempe, as I have so certainly discovered ano-

ther person in my picture. The other outside is a cardinal, called by Mr. Ives, Babington; but I believe Cardinal Beaufort, *for* the lion of England stands by him, which a bastardly prince of the blood was more likely to assume than a true one. His face is not very like, nor very unlike, the face in my picture; but this is shaven—but now comes the great point. On the inside is Humphrey duke of Gloucester, kneeling—not only as exactly resembling mine as possible, but with the same almost bald head, and the precisely same furred robe. An apostle-like personage stands behind him, holding a golden chalice, as his r. highness's offering, and, which is remarkable, the duke's velvet cap of state, with his coronet of strawberry leaves.

I used to say, to corroborate my hypothesis, that the scull of duke Humphrey at St. Albans was very like the form of head in my picture, which argument diverted the late lord Holland extremely—but I trust now that nobody will dispute any longer my perfect acquaintance with *all dukes of Gloucester*—by the way, did I ever tell you that when I published my Historic Doubts on Richard III., my niece's marriage not being then acknowledged, George Selwyn said, he did not think *I* should have *doubted* about the duke of Gloucester? On the inside of the other shutter is a man unknown: he is in a stable as Joseph might be, but over him hangs a shield of arms, that are neither Joseph's nor Mary's. The colours are either black and

white, or so changed as not to be distinguishable. * * * * * I conclude the person who is in red and white was the donor of the altarpiece or benefactor; and what I want of you is to discover him and his arms; and to tell me whether duke Humphrey, Beaufort, Kempe, and Babington, were connected with St. Edmondsbury, or whether this unknown person was not a retainer of duke Humphrey, at least of the royal family.

At the same sale I bought a curious pair, that I conclude came from Blickling, with Hobart impaling Boleyn, from which latter family the former enjoyed that seat. How does this third winter of the season agree with you? The wind to-day is sharper than a razor, and blows icicles into one's eyes. I was confined for seven weeks with the gout, yet am so well recovered as to have been abroad to-day, though it is as mild under the pole.

Pray can you tell me the title of the book that Mr. Ives dedicated to me? I never saw it, for he was so odd (I cannot call it modest, lest I should seem not so myself) as never to send it to me, and I never could get it.

Yours most truly.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Feb. 27, 1777.

You see, dear sir, that we thought on each other just at the same moment; but as usual, you was thinking of obliging me, and I of giving you trouble. You have fully satisfied me of the connexion between the Lancastrian princes and St. Edmondsbury. Edmondson, I conclude, will be able to find out the proprietor of the arms, impaling Walrond.

I am well acquainted with sir A. Weldon and the Aulicus Coquinanæ, and will return them with Mr. Ives's tracts, which I intend to buy at the sale of his books. Tell me how I may convey them to you most safely. You say, "Till I shew an inclination to borrow more of your MSS." I hope you do not think my appetite for that loan is in the least diminished. I should at all minutes and ever be glad to peruse them all—but I was not sure you wished to lend them to me, though you deny me nothing—and my own fear of their coming to any mischance, made me very modest about asking for them—but, now, whenever you can send me any of them with perfect security, I eagerly and impudently ask to see them: you cannot oblige me more, I assure you.

I am sorry Dr. E * * n is got into such a dirty scrape. There is scarce any decent medium observed

at present between wasting fortunes and fabricating them—and both by any disreputable manner: for as to saving money by prudent economy, the method is too slow in proportion to consumptions: even forgery, alas![1] seems to be the counterpart or restorative of the ruin by gaming. I hope at least that robbery on the highway will go out of fashion as too piddling a profession for gentlemen.

I enclose a card for your friends, but must advertise them that March is in every respect a wrong month for seeing Strawberry. It not only wants its leaves and beauty then, but most of the small pictures and curiosities, which are taken down and packed up in winter, are not restored to their places, till the weather is fine and I am more there. Unless they are confined in time, your friends had much better wait till May—but, however, they will be very welcome to go when they please. I am more personally interested in hoping to see you there this summer—you must visit my new tower. Diminutive as it is, it adds much to the antique air of the whole in both fronts. You know I shall sympathize with your gout, and you are always master of your own hours.

Yours most sincerely.

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[1] Alluding to Dr. Dodd.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 22, 1777.

It is not owing to forgetfulness, negligence, or idleness—to none of which I am subject, that you have not heard from me since I saw you, dear sir, but to my miserable occupation with my poor nephew, who engrosses my whole attention, and will I doubt destroy my health, if he does not recover his. I have got him within fourteen miles of town with difficulty. He is rather worse than better, may recover in an instant as he did last time, or remain in his present sullenness. I am far from expecting he should ever be perfectly in his senses, which, in my opinion, he scarce ever was. His intervals expose him to the worst people, his relapses overwhelm me.

I have put together some trifles I promised you, and will beg Mr. Lort to be the bearer when he goes to Cambridge, if I know of it. At present I have time for nothing I like. My age and inclination call for retirement: I envied your happy hermitage and leisure to follow your inclination. I have always *lived post*, and shall now die before I can bait—yet it is not my wish to be unemployed, could I but choose my occupations. I wish I could think of the pictures you mention, or had time to see Dr. Glynn and the master of Emanuel. I dote on Cambridge, and could like to be often

there—The beauty of King's College Chapel, now it is restored, penetrated me with a visionary longing to be a monk in it, though my life has been passed in turbulent scenes, in pleasures—or rather pastimes, and in much fashionable dissipation, still books, antiquity, and *virtû* kept hold of a corner of my heart, and since necessity has forced me of late years to be a man of business, my disposition tends to be a recluse for what remains—but it will not be my lot, and though there is some excuse for the young doing what they like, I doubt an old man should do nothing but what he ought, and I hope doing one's duty is the best preparation for death. Sitting with one's arms folded to think about it, is a very lazy way of preparing for it. If Charles V. had resolved to make some amends for his abominable ambition by doing good, his duty as a king, there would have been infinitely more merit than going to doze in a convent. One may avoid active guilt in a sequestered life, but the virtue of it is merely negative, though innocence is beautiful.

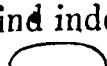
I approve much of your corrections on sir J. Hawkins, and send them to the magazine.

I want the exact blazon of William of Hatfield his arms, I mean the prince buried at York: Mr. Mason and I are going to restore his monument, and I have not time to look for them: I know you will be so good as to assist

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

May 28, 1777.

I have but time for a word. Mr. Lort has just been here and does not return to Cambridge this month: he has advised me to send the box by the waggon; and it goes to-morrow by Burley's from the Bull. It is a large box, and yet contains very little, and less worth sending you; but the glass required bran, which makes the bulk. I found most of the pieces I bought at Mr. Ives's had suffered so much, by being brought to London, and carried to Twickenham, that they were too broken to offer you. You will find indeed but one good piece, that in this shape  . The strange old ivory carving was given to me by the dowager duchess of Aiguillon. There are a few proofs of views of Strawberry; but some time or other you shall have a new and complete set. There is Strawberry's pedigree too; but I can find no print of Ganginelli. I am ashamed so large a box should contain only such rubbish. Adieu.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 19, 1777.

I thank you for your notices, dear sir, and shall remember that on Prince William. I did see the

Monthly Review, but hope one is not guilty of the death of every man who does not make one the dupe of a forgery.

I believe M'Pherson's success with Ossian, was more the ruin of Chatterton than I. Two years passed between my doubting the authenticity of Rowley's poems and his death. I never knew he had been in London till some time after he had undone and poisoned himself there. The poems he sent me were transcripts in his own hand, and even in that circumstance he told a lie: he said he had them from the very person at Bristol to whom he had given them. If any man was to tell you that monkish rhymes had been dug up at Herculaneum, which was destroyed several centuries before there was any such poetry, should you believe it? Just the reverse is the case of Rowley's pretended poems. They have all the elegance of Waller and Prior, and more than lord Surry—but I have no objection to any body believing what he pleases. I think poor Chatterton was an astonishing genius—but I cannot think that Rowley foresaw metres that were invented long after he was dead, or that our language was more refined at Bristol in the reign of Henry V. than it was at court under Henry VIII. One of the chaplains of the bishop of Exeter has found a line of Rowley in Hudibras—the monk might foresee that too! The prematurity of Chatterton's genius is, however, full as wonderful, as that such a prodigy as Row-

ley should never have been heard of till the eighteenth century. The youth and industry of the former are miracles too, yet still more credible. There is not a symptom in the poems, but the old words, that savours of Rowley's age—change the old words for modern, and the whole construction is of yesterday.

The other story you tell me, is very credible and perfectly in character.

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, July 10, 1777.

DON'T be alarmed at this thousandth letter in a week. This is more to lady Hamilton[1] than to you. Pray tell her I have seen *monsieur la Bataille d'Agincourt.*[2] He brought me her letter yesterday: and I kept him to sup, *sleep* in the modern phrase, and breakfast here this morning; and flatter myself he was, and she will be, content with the regard I paid to her letter.

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1 The first wife of sir William Hamilton, envoy extraordinary at the court of Naples.

2 M. le chevalier d'Azincourt, a French antiquary, long settled in Italy.

The weather is a thought warmer to-day, and I am as busy as bees are about their hay. My *hayssians*[3] have cost me as much as if I had hired them of the landgrave.

I am glad your invasion[4] is blown over. I fear I must invite those flat-bottomed vessels hither, as the Swissess Necker has directed them to the port of Twickenham. Madame de Blot is too fine, and monsieur Schomberg one of the most disagreeable, cross, contemptuous savages I ever saw. I have often supped with him at the duchess de Choiseul's, and could not bear him; and now I must be *charmé* and *penetré* and *comblé* to see him: and I shall act it very ill, as I always do when I don't do what I like. Madame Necker's letter is as affected and *précieuse*, as if Marmontel had written it for a Peruvian milk-maid. She says I am a philosopher, and as like madame de Sevigné as two peas — who was as unlike a philosopher as a gridiron. As I have none of madame de Sevigné's natural easy wit, I am rejoiced that I am no more like a philosopher neither, and still less like a *philosophe*; which is a being compounded of D'Urfey and Diogenes, a pastoral coxcomb and a supercilious brute.

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[3] Hessians.

[4] A party of French nobility then in England, who were to have made a visit at Park-place.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 31, 1777.

YOU are very kind, dear sir, in giving me an account of your health and occupations, and inquiring after mine. I am very sorry you are not as free from gout, as I have been ever since February; but I trust it will only keep you from other complaints, and never prevent your amusing yourself, which you are one of those few happy beings that can always do; and your temper is so good, and your mind so naturally philosophic, composed, and contented, that you neither want the world, care about it, nor are affected by any thing that occurs in it.—This is true wisdom, but wisdom which nothing can give but constitution. Detached amusements have always made a great part of my own delight, and have sown my life with some of its best moments. My intention was, that they should be the employments of my latter years, but fate seems to have chalked out a very different scene for me! The misfortune of my nephew, has involved me in business, and consequently care, and opens a scene of disputes, with which I shall not molest your tranquillity.

The dangerous situation in which his royal highness the duke of Gloucester has been, and out of which I doubt he is scarce yet emerged, though better, has added more thorns to my

uneasy mind. The duchess's daughters are at Hampton-court, and partly under my care. In one word, my whole summer has been engrossed by duties, which have confined me at home, without indulging myself in a single pursuit to my taste.

In short, as I have told you before, I often wish myself a monk at Cambridge. Writers on government condemn, very properly, a recluse life, as contrary to nature's interest, who loves procreation. But as nature seems not very desirous that we should procreate to threescore years and ten, I think convents very suitable retreats for those whom our *Alma Mater* does not emphatically call to her *Opus Magnum*. And though to be sure grey hairs are fittest to conduct state affairs, yet as the Rehoboams of the world, (Louis XVI. excepted,) do not always trust the rudder of government to ancient hands; old gentlemen methinks are very ill placed [when not at the council board] any where but in a cloister. As I have no more vocation to the ministry than to carrying on my family, I sigh after a dormitory; and as in six weeks my clock will strike sixty, I wish I had nothing more to do with the world. I am not tired of living, but—but what signifies sketching visions? One must take one's lot as it comes; bitter and sweet are poured into every cup. To-morrow may be pleasanter than to-day. Nothing lasts of one colour. One must embrace

the cloister, or take the chances of the world as they present themselves; and since uninterrupted happiness would but embitter the certainty that even that must end, rubs and crosses should be softened by the same consideration. I am not so busied, but I shall be very glad of a sight of your MS. and will return it carefully. I will thank you too for the print of Mr. Jenyns which I have not, nor have seen.—Adieu!

Dear sir,

Yours most cordially.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 16, 1777.

I HAVE received your volume safely, dear sir, and hurry to thank you before I have read a page, that you may be in no pain about its arrival. I will return it with the greatest care as soon as I have finished it; and at the same time will send Mr. Essex the bills, as I beg you will let him know. I have no less reason for writing immediately, to thank you for the great confidence you place in me. You talk of *nonsense;* alas! what are all our opinions else? if we search for truth before we fix our principles, what do we find but doubt? And which of us begins the search a

tabula rasa? Nay, where can we hunt but in volumes of error or purposed delusion? Have not we too, a bias in our own minds—our passions? They will turn the scale in favour of the doctrines most agreeable to them. Yet let us be a little vain: you and I differ radically in our principles, and yet in forty years they have never cast a gloom over our friendship. We could give the world a reason that it would not like. We have both been sincere, have both been consistent, and neither adopted our principles nor have varied them for our interest.

Your labour, as far as I am acquainted with it, astonishes me; it shows what can be achieved by a man that does not lose a moment; and, which is still better, how happy the man is who can always employ himself. I do not believe that the proud prelate, who would not make you a little happier, is half so much to be envied. Thank you for the print of Soame Jenyns: it is a proof of sir Joshua's art, who could give a strong resemblance of so uncouth a countenance, without leaving it disagreeable.

The duke of Gloucester is miraculously revived. For two whole days I doubted whether he was not dead. I hope fatalists and omen-mongers will be confuted; and thus, as his grandfather broke the charm of the second of the name being an unfortunate prince, the duke will baffle

that, which has made the title of Gloucester unpropitious. Adieu,

Dear sir,

Yours most gratefully.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Tuesday evening, Sept. 16, 1777.

I HAVE got a delightful plaything, if I had time for play. It is a new sort of camera-obscura[1] for drawing the portraits of persons, or prospects, or insides of rooms, and does not depend on the sun or any thing. The misfortune is, that there is a vast deal of machinery and putting together, and I am the worst person living for managing it. You know I am impenetrably dull in every thing that requires a grain of common sense. The inventor is to come to me on Friday, and try if he can make me remember my right hand from my left. I could as soon have invented my machine as manage it; yet it has cost me ten guineas, and may cost me as much more as I please for improving it. You will conclude it was the dearness tempted me. I believe I must keep an astrono-

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[1] The machine called a delineator.

mer, like Mr. Beauclerc, to help me to play with my rattle. The inventor, who seems very modest and simple, but I conclude an able flatterer, was in love with my house, and vowed nothing ever suited his camera so well. To be sure, the painted windows and the prospects, and the Gothic chimneys, &c. &c. were the delights of one's eyes, when no bigger than a silver penny. *You* would know how to manage it, as if you had never done any thing else. Had not you better come and see it? You will learn how to conduct it, with the pleasure of correcting my awkwardness and *unlearnibility*. Sir Joshua Reynolds and West have each got one; and the duke of Northumberland is so charmed with the invention, that I dare say he can talk upon and explain it till I should understand ten times less of the matter than I do. Remember, neither lady Ailesbury nor you, nor Mrs. Damer, have seen my new divine closet, nor the billiard-sticks with which the countess of Pembroke and Arcadia used to play with her brother sir Philip; nor the portrait of *la belle* Jennings in the state bedchamber. I go to town this day se'nnight for a day or two; and as, *to be sure*, Mount Edgecumbe has put you out of humour with Park-place, you may deign to leave it for a moment. I never did see Cotchel,[2] and am sorry.

[2] The old residence of the family of Edgecumbe, twelve miles distant from Mount Edgecumbe.

Is not the old wardrobe there still? There was one from the time of Cain; but Adam's breeches and Eve's under petticoat were eaten by a goat in the ark. Good night.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 22, 1777.

I RETURN you your MS. dear sir, with a thousand thanks, and shall be impatient to hear that you receive it safe. It has amused me much, and I admire Mr. Baker for having been able to show so much sense on so dry a subject. I wish, as you say you have materials for it, that you would write his life. He deserved it much more than most of those he has recorded. His book on the Deficiencies of Learning is most excellent—and far too little known. I admire his moderation too, which was extraordinary in a man who had suffered so much for his principles. Yet they warped even him, for he rejects bishop Burnet's character of bishop Gunning in p. 200, and yet in the very next page, gives the same character of him. Burnet's words are, "he had a great confusion of things in his head, but could bring nothing into method:" pray compare this with p. 201. I see nothing in which they differ, except that Burnet

does not talk so much of his comeliness as Mr. Baker.

I shall not commend *your* moderation, when you excuse such a man as bishop Watson. Nor ought you to be angry with Burnet, but with the witnesses on whose evidence Watson was convicted. To tell you the truth, I am glad when such faults are found with Burnet, for it shows his enemies are not angry at his telling falsehoods, but the truth. Must not an historian say a bishop was convicted of simony, if he was? I will tell you what was said of Burnet's History, by one whose testimony you yourself will not dispute—at least you would not in any thing else. That confessor said, "Damn him, he has told a great deal of truth, but where the devil did he learn it?" This was St. Atterbury's testimony.

I shall take the liberty of reproving you too, dear sir, for defending that abominable murderess queen Christina—and how can you doubt her conversation with Burnet? you must know there are a thousand evidences of her laughing at the religion she embraced. If you approve her, I will allow you to condemn lord Russel and Algernon Sidney. Well, as we shall never have the same heroes, we will not dispute about them, nor shall I find fault when you have given me so much entertainment: it would be very ungrateful, and I have a thousand obligations to you, and want to have more. I want to see more of your MSS.: they

are full of curiosities, and I love some of your heroes too: I honour bishop Fisher, and love Mr. Baker.

I have found very few errata indeed, and have corrected a few with a pencil; all are very trifling. In p. 2, last line but one, *originial* is written for *original*, and in p. 6, line 7, of the copy of verses *lyest* for *lyes;* in p. 10, line 17, *authentic* probably for *unauthentic*.

In p. 200, you are a little mistaken. The late king of France was not silent from rule, but shyness: he could scarce ever be persuaded to speak to entire strangers.

If I might choose, I should like to see your account of the persons educated at King's — but as you may have objections, I insist if you have, that you make me no word of answer. It is, perhaps, impertinent to ask it, and silence will lay neither of us under any difficulty. I have no right to make such a request, nor do now, but on the foot of its proving totally indifferent to you. You will make me blame myself, if it should a moment distress you, and I am sure you are too good-natured to put me out of humour with myself, which your making no answer would not do.

I enclose my bills for Mr. Essex, and will trouble you to send them to him. I again thank you, and trust you will be as friendly free with me, as I have been with you: you know I am a brother monk in every thing but religious and

political opinions. I only laugh at the thirty-nine articles: but abhor Calvin as much as I do the queen of Sweden, for he was as thorough an assassin.

Yours ever.

P. S. As I have a great mind, and indeed ought when I require it, to show moderation, and when I have not, ought to confess it, which I do, for I own I am not moderate on certain points; if you are busy yourself and will send me the materials, I will draw up the life of Mr. Baker; or, if you are not content with it, you shall burn it in Smithfield.

In good truth I revere conscientious martyrs, of all sects, communions, and parties — I heartily pity them, if they are weak men. When they are as sensible as Mr. Baker, I doubt my own understanding more than his. I know I have not his virtues, but should delight in doing justice to them; and perhaps from a man of a different party the testimony would be more to his honour. I do not call myself of different principles; because a man that thinks himself bound by his oath, can be a man of no principle if he violates it.

I do not mean to deny but many men might think king James's breach of his oath, a dispensation from theirs; but, if they did not think so, or did not think their duty to their country obliged

them to renounce their king, I should never defend those who took the new oaths from interest.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 2, 1777.

I am a little uneasy, dear sir, at not hearing that you have received your precious volume. I sent it as you ordered to the Queen's Head, in Gray's-inn-lane, yesterday was sevennight, and my own servant carried it, and they assured him you would receive it the next day. With it I troubled you with a little parcel for Mr. Essex. As he promised me to come hither the beginning of this month, I am in hopes he is coming, and will bring me word of your having received your book. I should be out of my wits if you had not.

Yours ever.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

October 5, 1777.

You are exceedingly good, and I shall assuredly accept your proposal in the fullest sense, and, to ensure Mrs. Damer, beg I may expect you on

Saturday next the 11th. If lord and lady William Campbell will do me the honour of accompanying you, I shall be most happy to see them, and expect miss Caroline.[1] Let me know about them, that the state bedchamber may be aired.

My difficulties about removing from home arise from the consciousness of my own weakness. I make it a rule, as much as I can, to conform wherever I go. Though I am threescore to-day, I should not think that an age for giving every thing up; but it is for whatever one has not strength to perform. You, though not a vast deal younger, are as healthy and strong, thank God, as ever you was: and you cannot have ideas of the mortification of being stared at by strangers and servants, when one hobbles, or cannot do as others do. I delight in being with you, and the Richmonds, and those I love and know; but the crowds of young people, and Chichester folks, and officers, and strange servants, make me afraid of Goodwood, I own. My spirits are never low, but they will seldom last out the whole day; and though I dare to say I appear to many capricious, and different from the rest of the world, there is more reason in my behaviour than there seems. You know in London I seldom stir out in a morn-

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[1] Miss Caroline Campbell, eldest daughter of lord William Campbell.

ing, and always late; and it is because I want a great deal of rest. Exercise never did agree with me: and it is hard if I do not know myself by this time; and what has done so well with me will probably suit me best for the rest of my life. It would be ridiculous to talk so much of myself, and to enter into such trifling details, but *you* are the person in the world that I wish to convince that I do not act merely from humour or ill-humour; though I confess at the same time that I want your *bonhommie*, and have a disposition not to care at all for people that I do not absolutely like. I could say a great deal more on this head, but it is not proper; though, when one has pretty much done with the world, I think with lady Blandford that one may indulge one's self in one's own whims and partialities in one's own house. I do not mean, still less to profess, retirement, because it is less ridiculous to go on with the world to the last, than to return to it: but in a quiet way it has long been my purpose to drop a great deal of it. Of all things I am farthest from not intending to come often to Park-place, whenever you have little company; and I had rather be with you in November than in July, because I am so totally unable to walk farther than a snail. I will never say any more on these subjects, because there may be as much affectation in being over old, as folly in being over young. My idea of age is, that one has nothing really to do but what one ought, and

what is reasonable. All affectations are pretensions; and pretending to be any thing one is not, cannot deceive when one is known, as every body must be that has lived long. I do not mean that old folks may not have pleasures, if they can; but then I think those pleasures are confined to being comfortable, and to enjoying the few friends one has not outlived. I am so fair as to own, that one's duties are not pleasures. I have given up a great deal of my time to nephews and nieces, even to some I can have little affection for. I do love my nieces, nay like them; but people above forty years younger are certainly not the society I should seek. They can only think and talk of what is, or is to come; I certainly am more disposed to think and talk of what is past: and the obligation of passing the end of a long life in sets of totally new company is more irksome to me than passing a great deal of my time, as I do, quite alone. Family love and pride make me interest myself about the young people of my own family — for the whole rest of the young world, they are as indifferent to me as puppets or black children. This is my creed, and a key to my whole conduct, and the more likely to remain my creed, as I think it is *raisonné*. If I could paint my opinions instead of writing them, and I don't know whether it would not make a new sort of alphabet, I should use different colours for different affections at different ages. When I speak

of love, affection, friendship, taste, liking, I should draw them rose colour, carmine, blue, green, yellow, for my contemporaries: for new comers, the first would be of no colour; the others, purple, brown, crimson, and changeable. Remember, one tells one's creed only to one's confessor, that is *sub sigillo*. I write to you as I think; to others as I must. Adieu!

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 19, 1777.

I THANK you much, dear sir, for the sight of the book, which I return by Mr. Essex. It is not new to me that Burnet paid his court on the other side in the former part of his life: nor will I insist that he changed on conviction, which might be said and generally is for all converts, even those who shift their principles the most glaringly from interest. Duke Lauderdale indeed was such a dog, that the honestest man must have been driven to detest him, however connected with him. I doubt Burnet could not be blind to his character, when he wrote the dedication. In truth I have given up many of my saints, but not on the accusations of such wretches as Dalrymple and Macpherson: nor can men, so much their opposites, shake my faith in lord Russel and Algernon Sidney. I do not re-

linquish those that sealed their integrity with their blood, but such as have taken thirty pieces of silver.

I was sorry you said we had any variance. We have differed in sentiments but not in friendship. Two men, however unlike in principles, may be perfect friends, when both are sincere in their opinions as we are. Much less shall we quarrel about those of our separate parties, since very few on either side have been so invariably consistent as you and I have been; and therefore we are more sure of each other's integrity, than that of men whom we know less and who did vary from themselves. As you and I are only speculative persons, and no actors, it would be very idle to squabble about those that do not exist. In short, we are I trust in as perfect good humour with each other as we have been these forty years.

Pray do not hurry yourself about the anecdotes of Mr. Baker, nor neglect other occupations on that account. I shall certainly not have time to do any thing this year. I expect the duke and duchess of Gloucester in a very few days, must go to town as soon as they arrive, and shall probably have not much idle leisure before next summer.

It is not very discreet to look even so far forward, nor am I apt any longer to lay distant plans. A little sedentary literary amusement is indeed no

very lofty castle in the air, if I do lay the foundation in idea seven or eight months beforehand.

Whatever MSS. you lend me, I shall be very grateful for. They entertain me exceedingly, and I promise you we will not have the shadow of an argument about them. I do not love disputation even with those most indifferent to me. *Your* pardon I most sincerely beg for having contested a single point with you. I am sure it was not with a grain of ill-humour towards you: on the contrary, it was from wishing at that moment that you did not approve though I disliked—but even that I give up as unreasonable.

You are in the right, dear sir, not to apply to Masters for any papers he may have relating to Mr. Baker. It is a trumpery fellow, from whom one would rather receive a refusal than an obligation.

I am sorry to hear Mr. Lort has the gout, and still more concerned that you still suffer from it. Such patience and temper as yours are the only palliatives. As the bootikins have so much abridged and softened my fits, I do not expect their return with the alarm and horror I used to do, and that is being cured of one half the complaints. I had scarce any pain last time, and did not keep my bed a day, and had no gout at all in either foot. May not I ask you if this is not some merit in the bootikins? To have cured me of my apprehen-

sions, is to me a vast deal, for now the intervals do not connect the fits. You will understand, that I mean to speak a word to you in favour of the bootikins, for can one feel benefit, and not wish to impart it to a suffering friend?

Indeed I am

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, March 31, 1778.

I did think it long indeed, dear sir, since I heard from you, and am very sorry the gout was the cause. I hope after such long persecution you will have less now than you apprehend.

I should not have been silent myself, had I had any thing to tell you that you would have cared to hear.

Politics have been the only language, and abuse the only expression of the winter, neither of which are, or deserve to be, inmates of your peaceable hermitage. I wish, however, they may not have grown so serious as to threaten every retreat with intrusion! I will let you know when I am settled at Strawberry-hill, and can look over your kind collections relating to Mr. Baker. He certainly deserves his place in the Biographia, but I am not surprised that *you* would not submit to *his* being

instituted and inducted by a presbyterian. In truth, I, who have not the same zeal against dissenters, do not at all desire to peruse the History of their Apostles, which are generally very uninteresting.

You must excuse the shortness of this, in which too I have been interrupted: my nephew is as suddenly recovered as he did last time; and, though I am far from thinking him perfectly in his senses, a great deal of his disorder is removed, which, though it will save me a great deal of trouble, hurries me at present, and forces me to conclude.

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, April 23, 1778.

I THANK you, dear sir, for the notice of William Le Worcestre's appearance, and will send for my book as soon as I go to town, which will not be till next week.

I have been here since Friday as much a hermit as yourself. I wanted air and quiet, having been much fatigued on my nephew's amendment, trying to dissuade him from making the campaign with his militia; but in vain! I now dread hearing of some eccentric freak. I am sorry Mr. Tyson

has quite dropped me, though he sometimes comes to town. I am still more concerned at your frequent disorders—I hope their chief seat is unwillingness to move.

Your Bakeriana will be very welcome about June: I shall not be completely resident here till then; at least not have leisure, as May is the month I have most visits from town. As few spare hours as I have, I have contrived to go through Mr. Pennant's Welsh Tour, and Mr. Warton's second volume; both which come within the circle of your pursuits. I have far advanced too in lord Hardwick's first volume of State Papers. I have yet found nothing that appears a new scene, or sets the old in a new light; yet they are rather amusing, though not in proportion to the bulk of the volumes. One likes to hear actors speak for themselves — but, on the other hand, they use a great many more words than are necessary: and when one knows the events from history, it is a little tiresome to go back to the details and the delays.

I should be glad to employ Mr. Essex on my offices, but the impending war with France deters me. It is not a season for expence! I could like to leave my little castle complete; but though I am only a spectator, I cannot be indifferent to the melancholy aspect of the times, as the country gentleman was, who was going out with his hounds as the two armies at Edge-hill were going to en-

gage! I wish for peace and tranquillity, and should be glad to pass my remaining hours in the idle and retired amusements I love, and without any solicitude for my country. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 21, 1778.

I WILL not flatter you: I was not in the least amused with either Simon, Simeon, or William, of Wyrcestre. If there was any thing tolerable in either, it was the part omitted, or the part I did not read, which was the Journey to Jerusalem, about which I have not the smallest curiosity. I thank you for mentioning the Gentleman's Magazine, which I sent for.

Mr. Essex has called upon me, and left me the drawing of a bridge, with which I am perfectly pleased — but I was unluckily out of town; he left no direction, and I know not where to seek him in this overgrown bottle of hay. I still hope he will call again before his return.

May not I, should not I, wish you joy on the restoration of popery? I expect soon to see capuchins tramping about, and Jesuits *in high places.* We are relapsing fast to our pristine state, and have nothing but our island, and our old religion.

Mr. Nasmith's publication directed me to

the MSS. in Bennet Library, which I did not know was printed. I found two or three from which I should be glad to have transcripts, and would willingly pay for; but I left the book at Strawberry, and must trouble you another time with that commission.

The city wants to bury lord Chatham in St. Paul's, which, as a person said to me this morning, would literally be *robbing Peter to pay Paul.* I wish it could be so, that there might be some decoration in that nudity, *en attendant*, the re-establishment of various altars. It is not my design to purchase the new edition of the Biographia; I trust they will give the old purchasers the additions as a supplement. I had corrected the errata of the press throughout my copy, but I could not take the trouble of transcribing them, nor could lend them the originals, as I am apt to scribble notes in the margins of all my books that interest me at all. Pray let me know if Baker's Life is among the additions, and whether you are satisfied with it, as there could not be events enough in his retired life to justify two accounts of it.

There are no new *old news*, and you care for nothing within the memory of man. I am always intending to draw up an account of my intercourse with Chatterton, which I take very kindly you remind me of, but some avocation or other has still prevented it. My perfect innocence of having indirectly been an ingredient in his dismal fate,

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which happened two years after our correspondence, and after he had exhausted both his resources and his constitution, have made it more easy to prove that I never saw him, knew nothing of his ever being in London, and was the first person, instead of the last, on whom he had practised his impositions, and founded his chimeric hopes of promotion. My very first, or at least second letter, undeceived him in those views, and our correspondence was broken off before he quitted his master's business and Bristol — so that his disappointment with me was but his first ill success; and he resented my incredulity so much, that he never condescended to let me see him. Indeed, what I have said now to you, and which cannot be controverted by a shadow of a doubt, would be sufficient vindication. I could only add to the proofs a vain regret of never having known his distresses, which his amazing genius would have tempted me to relieve, though I fear he had no other claim to compassion. Mr. Warton has said enough to open the eyes of every one who is not greatly prejudiced to his forgeries. Dr. Milles is one who will not make a bow to Dr. Percy for not being as wilfully blind as himself — but when he gets a beam in his eye that he takes for an antique truth, there is no persuading him to submit to be couched.

Adieu, dear sir,

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 3, 1778.

I will not dispute with you, dear sir, on patriots and politics. One point is past controversy, that the ministers have ruined this country; and if the church of England's satisfied with being reconciled to the church of Rome, and thinks it a compensation for the loss of America, and all credit in Europe, she is as silly an old woman as any granny in an alms-house. France is very glad we are grown such fools, and soon saw that the presbyterian Dr. Franklin had more sense than our ministers together. She has got over all her prejudices, has expelled the Jesuits, and made the protestant Swiss, Necker, her comptroller-general. It is a little woeful, that we are relapsing into the nonsense the rest of Europe is shaking off! and it is the more deplorable, as we know by repeated experience, that this country has always been disgraced by Tory administrations. The rubric is the only gainer by them in a few martyrs.

I do not know yet what is settled about the spot of lord Chatham's interment. I am no more an enthusiast to his memory than you. I knew his faults and his defects — yet one fact cannot only not be controverted, but I doubt more remarkable every day — I mean, that under him we attained not only our highest elevation, but the most solid

authority in Europe. When the names of Marlborough and Chatham are still pronounced with awe in France, our little cavils make a puny sound. Nations that are beaten cannot be mistaken. I have been looking out for your friend a set of my heads of painters, and find I want six or seven. I think I have some odd ones in town; if I have not, I will have deficiencies supplied from the plates, though I fear they will not be good, as so many have been taken off. I should be very ungrateful for all your kindnesses, if I neglected any opportunity of obliging you, dear sir. Indeed our old and unalterable friendship is creditable to us both, and very uncommon between two persons who differ so much in their opinions relative to church and state — I believe the reason is, that we are both sincere, and never meant to take advantage of our principles, which I allow is too common on both sides; and I own too fairly more common on my side of the question than on yours. There is a reason too for that: the honours and emoluments are in the gift of the crown: the nation has no separate treasury to reward its friends.

If Mr. Tyrrwhit has opened his eyes to Chatterton's forgeries, there is an instance of conviction against strong prejudice! I have drawn up an account of my transaction with that marvellous young man; you shall see it one day or other, but I do not intend to print it. I have taken a thorough dislike to being an author; and if it would

not look like begging you to compliment me, by contradicting me, I would tell you, what I am most seriously convinced of, that I find what small share of parts I had, grown dulled—and when I perceive it myself, I may well believe that others would not be less sharp-sighted. It is very natural; mine were spirits rather than parts; and as time has abated the one, it must surely destroy their resemblance to the other: pray don't say a syllable in reply on this head, or I shall have done exactly what I said I would not do. Besides, as you have always been too partial to me, I am on my guard, and when I will not expose myself to my enemies, I must not listen to the prejudices of my friends; and as nobody is more partial to me than you, there is nobody I must trust less in that respect.

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 10, 1778.

I am as impatient and in as much hurry as you was, dear sir, to clear myself from the slightest intention of censuring your politics. I know the sincerity and disinterested goodness of your heart, and when I must be convinced how little certain we are all of what is truth, it would be very presumptuous to condemn the opinions of any good

man, and still less an old and unalterable friend, as I have ever found you. The destruction that violent arbitrary principles have drawn on this blinded country has moved my indignation. We never were a great and happy country till the Revolution. The system of these days tended to overturn and has overturned that establishment, and brought on the disgraces that ever attended the foolish and wicked councils of the house of Stuart. If man is a rational being, he has a right to make use of his reason, and to enjoy his liberty. We, we alone almost had a constitution that every other nation upon earth envied or ought to envy. This is all I contend for. I will give you up whatever descriptions of men you please; that is, the leaders of parties, not the principles. These cannot change, those generally do, when power falls into the hands of them or their party, because men are corruptible, which truth is not. But the more the leaders of a party dedicated to liberty are apt to change, the more I adore the principle, because it shews that extent of power is not to be trusted even with those that are the most sensible of the value of liberty. Man is a domineering animal; and it has not only been my principle, but my practice too, to quit every body at the gate of the palace. I trust we shall not much differ on these outlines, but we will bid adieu to the subject: it is never an agreeable one to those who do not mean to make a trade of it.

I heartily wish you may not find the pontiff what I think the order and what I know him, if you mean the high priest of Ely. He is all I have been describing and worse: and I have too good an opinion of you, to believe that he will ever serve you.

What I said of disclaiming authorship by no means alluded to Mr. Baker's life. It would be enough that you desire it, for me to undertake it. Indeed, I am inclined to it, because he was what you and I are, a party-man from principle, not from interest: and he who was so candid surely is entitled to the strictest candour. You shall send me your papers whenever you please. If I can succeed to your satisfaction, I shall be content; though I assure you there was no affectation in my saying that I find my small talent decline. I shall write the life to oblige you without any thoughts of publication, unless I am better pleased than I expect to be, and even then not in my own life. I had rather shew that I am sensible of my own defects, and that I have judgment enough not to hope praise for my writings; for surely when they are not obnoxious, and one only leaves them behind one, it is a mark that one is not very vain of them.

I have found the whole set of my Painters, and will send them the first time I go to town: and I will have my papers on Chatterton transcribed for

you, though I am much chagrined at your giving me no hope of seeing you again here. I will not say more of it; for while it is in my power, I will certainly make you a visit now and then, if there is no other way of our meeting. Mr. Tyrrwhit, I hear, has actually published an Appendix, in which he gives up Rowley. I have not seen it, but will. Shall I beg you to transcribe the passage in which Dr. Kippis abuses my father and me, for I shall not buy the new edition, only to purchase abuse on me and mine: I may be angry with liberties he takes with sir Robert, but not with myself; I shall rather take it as a flattery to be ranked with him; though there can be nothing worse said of my father than to place us together. Oh! that great, that good man! Dr. Kippis may as well throw a stone at the sun.

I am sorry you have lost poor Mr. Bentham. Will you say a civil thing for me to his widow if she is living, and you think it not improper? I have not forgotten their great kindness to me. Pray send me your papers on Mr. Prior's generosity to Mr. Baker. I am sorry it was not so. Prior is much a favourite with me, *though a Tory*, nor did I ever hear any thing ill of him. He left his party, but not his friends, and seems to me to have been very amiable. Do you know I pretend to be very impartial sometimes. Mr. Hollis wrote against me for not being Whig enough. I am of-

fended with Mrs. Macaulay for being too much a Whig. In short, we are all silly animals, and scarce ever more so than when we affect sense.

Yours ever.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBURY.

Strawberry-hill, June 25, 1778.

I AM quite astonished, madam, at not hearing of Mr. Conway's being returned! What is he doing? Is he revolting and setting up for himself, like our nabobs in India? or is he forming Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark, into the united provinces in the compass of a silver penny? I should not wonder if this was to be the fate of our distracted empire, which we seem to have made so large, only that it might afford to split into separate kingdoms. I told Mr. C. I should not write any more, concluding he would not stay a twinkling; and your ladyship's last encouraged my expecting him. In truth, I had nothing to tell him if I had written.

I have been in town but one single night this age, as I could not bear to throw away this phœnix June. It has rained a good deal this morning, but only made it more delightful. The flowers are all Arabian. I have found but one inconve-

nience, which is the hosts of cuckoos: one would not think one was in Doctors Commons. It is very disagreeable, that the nightingales should sing but half a dozen songs, and the other beasts squall for two months together.

Poor Mrs. Clive has been robbed again in her own lane, as she was last year, and has got the jaundice, she thinks, with the fright. I don't make a visit without a blunderbuss; so one might as well be invaded by the French. Though I live in the centre of ministers, I do not know a syllable of politics; and though within hearing of lady * * *, who is but two miles off, I have not a word of news to send your ladyship. I live like Berecynthia, surrounded by nephews and nieces: big and little, I have fifteen near me: yet Parkplace is full as much in my mind, and I beg for its history.

Your most faithful.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

July 8, 1778.

I HAVE had some conversation with a ministerial person, on the subject of pacification with France; and he dropped a hint, that as we should not have much chance of a good peace, the opposition would make great clamour on it. I said a few

words on the duty of ministers to do what they thought right, be the consequence what it would. But as honest men do not want such lectures, and dishonest will not let them weigh, I waved that theme, to dwell on what is more likely to be persuasive, and which I am firmly persuaded is no less true than the former maxim; and that was, that the ministers are *still* so strong, that if they could get a peace that would save the nation, though not a brilliant or glorious one, the nation in general would be pleased with it, and the clamours of the opposition be insignificant.

I added, what I think true too, that no time is to be lost in treating; not only for preventing a blow, but from the consequences the first misfortune would have. The nation is not yet alienated from the court, but it is growing so; is grown so enough, for any calamity to have violent effects. Any internal disturbance would advance the hostile designs of France. An insurrection from distress would be a double invitation to invasion; and, I am sure, much more to be dreaded, even personally, by the ministers, than the ill-humours of opposition for even an inglorious peace. To do the opposition justice, it is not composed of incendiaries. Parliamentary speeches raise no tumults; but tumults would be a dreadful thorough bass to speeches. The ministers do not know the strength they have left (supposing they apply it in time), if they are afraid of making any peace. They were

too sanguine in making war; I hope they will not be too timid of making peace.

What do you think of an idea of mine, of offering France a neutrality? that is, to allow her to assist both us and the Americans. I know she would assist only them: but were it not better to connive at her assisting them, without attacking us, than her doing both? A treaty with her would perhaps be followed by one with America. We are sacrificing all the essentials we *can* recover, for a few words; and risking the independence of this country, for the nominal supremacy over America. France seems to leave us time for treating. She made no scruple of begging peace of us in 63, that she might lie by and recover her advantages. Was not that a wise precedent? Does not she *now* show that it was? Is not policy the honour of nations? I mean, not morally, but has Europe left itself any other honour? And since it has really left itself no honour, and as little morality, does not the morality of a nation consist in its preserving itself in as much happiness as it can? The invasion of Portugal by Spain in the last war, the partition of Poland, have abrogated the law of nations. Kings have left no ties between one another. Their duty to their people is still allowed. He is a good king that preserves his people; and if temporising answers that end, is it not justifiable? You, who are as moral as wise, answer my questions. Gro-

tius is obsolete. Dr. Joseph[1] and Dr. Frederic,[2] with four hundred thousand commentators, are reading new lectures — and I should say, thank God, to one another, if the four hundred thousand commentators were not in worse danger than they. Louis XIV. is grown a casuist compared to those partitioners. Well, let us simple individuals keep our honesty, and bless our stars that we have not armies at our command, lest we should divide kingdoms that are at our *bienséance!* What a dreadful thing it is for such a wicked little imp as man to have absolute power!—— But I have travelled into Germany, when I meant to talk to you only of England; and it is too late to recall my text. Good-night.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

July 12, 1778.

MR. Lort has delivered your papers to me, dear sir, and I have already gone through them. I will try if I can make any thing of them, but fear I have not art enough, as I perceive there is absolutely but one fact — the expulsion. You have certainly very clearly proved that Mr. Baker

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1 The emperor of Germany. 2 Frederic II. king of Prussia.

was neither supported by Mr. Prior nor bishop Burnet; but these are mere negatives. So is the question, whether he intended to compile an *Athenæ Cantabrigiensis* or not; and on that you say but little as you have not seen his papers in the Museum. I will examine the printed catalogue, and try if I can discover the truth thence, when I go to town. I will also borrow the new Biographia, as I wish to know more of the expulsion. As it is our only fact, one would not be too dry on it. Upon the whole, I think that it would be preferable to draw up an ample character of Mr. Baker, rather than a life. The one was most beautiful, amiable, conscientious; the other totally barren of more than one event: and though you have taken excellent pains to discover all that was possible, yet there is an obscurity hangs over the circumstances than even did attend him; as his connection with bishop Crewe and his living. His own modesty comes out the brighter, but then it composes a character, not a life.

As to Mr. Kippis and his censures I am perfectly indifferent to them. He betrays a pert malignity in hinting an intention of being severe on my father, for the pleasure of exerting a right I allowed and do allow to be a just one, though it is not just to do it for that reason; however, let him say his pleasure. The truth will not hurt my father; falsehood will recoil on the author.

His asserting that my censure of Mr. Addison's character of lord Somers is not to be justified, is a silly *ipse dixit*, as he does not, in truth cannot, show why it is not to be justified. The passage I alluded to is the argument of an old woman; and Mr. Addison's being a writer of true humour is not a justification of his reasoning like a superstitious gossip. In the other passage you have sent me, Mr. Kippis is perfectly in the right, and corrects me very justly. Had I even seen archbishop Abbot's Preface, with the outrageous flattery on, and lies of James I., I should certainly never have said, *Honest Abbot could not flatter*. I should have said and do say, I never saw grosser perversion of truth. One can almost excuse the faults of James when his bishops were such base sycophants. What can a king think of human nature, when it produces such wretches? I am too impartial to prefer puritans to clergymen, or *vice versa*, when Whitgift and Abbot only ran a race of servility and adulation: the result is that priests of all religions are the same. James and his Levites were worthy of each other; the golden calf and the idolaters were well coupled, and it is pity they ever came out of the wilderness. I am very glad Mr. Tyson has escaped death and disappointment: pray wish him joy of both from me. Has not this Indian summer dispersed your complaints? We are told we are to be invaded. Our Abbots and Whitgifts now see

with what successes and consequences their preaching up a crusade against America has been crowned! Archbishop Markham may have an opportunity of exercising his martial prowess. I doubt he would resemble bishop Crewe more than good Mr. Baker. Let us respect those only who are Israelites indeed. I surrender Dr. Abbot to you. Church and presbytery are human nonsense invented by knaves to govern fools. Church and king are terms for monopolies. *Exalted notions of church matters* are contradictions in terms to the lowliness and humility of the gospel. — There is nothing sublime but the divinity. Nothing is sacred but as his work. A tree, or a brute stone is more respectable as such, than a mortal called an archbishop, or an edifice called a church, which are the puny and perishable productions of men. Calvin and Wesley had just the same views as the Pope; power and wealth their objects. I abhor both, and admire Mr. Baker.

P. S. I like Popery as well as you, and have shown I do. I like it as I like chivalry and romance. They all furnish one with ideas and visions which presbyterianism does not. A Gothic church or a convent fill one with romantic dreams — but for the mysterious, the church in the abstract, it is a jargon that means nothing, or a great deal too much, and I reject it and its apostles, from Athanasius to bishop Keene.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Saturday, July 18, 1778.

YESTERDAY evening the following notices were fixed up in Lloyd's coffee-house:

That a merchant in the city had received an express from France, that the Brest fleet, consisting of 28 ships of the line, were sailed, with orders to burn, sink, and destroy.

That admiral Keppel was at Plymouth, and had sent to demand three more ships of the line to enable him to meet the French.

On these notices the stocks sunk $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

An account I have received this morning from a good hand says, that on Thursday the admiralty received a letter from admiral Keppel, who was off the Land's End, saying, that the Worcester was in sight; that the Peggy had joined him, and had seen the Thunderer making sail for the fleet; that he was waiting for the Centaur, Terrible, and Vigilant; and that having received advice from lord Shuldham that the Shrewsbury was to sail from Plymouth on Thursday, he should likewise wait for her. His fleet will then consist of 30 ships of the line; and he hoped to have an opportunity of trying his strength with the French fleet on our own coast: if not, he would seek them on theirs.

The French fleet sailed on the 7th, consisting of 31 ships of the line, 2 fifty gun ships, and 8 frigates.

This state is probably more authentic than those at Lloyd's.

Thus you see how big the moment is! and, unless far more favourable to us in its burst than good sense allows one to promise, it must leave us greatly exposed. Can we expect to beat without considerable loss?—and then, where have we another fleet? I need not state the danger from a reverse.

The Spanish ambassador certainly arrived on Monday.

I shall go to town on Monday for a day or two; therefore, if you write to-morrow, direct to Arlington-street.

I add no more: for words are unworthy of the situation; and to blame now, would be childish. It is hard to be gamed for against one's consent; but when one's country is at stake, one must throw one's self out of the question. When one is old, and nobody, one must be whirled with the current, and shake one's wings like a fly, if one lights on a pebble. The prospect is so dark, that one shall rejoice at whatever does not happen, that may. Thus I have composed a sort of philosophy for myself, that reserves every possible chance. You want none of these artificial aids to your resolution. Invincible courage and imma-

culate integrity are not dependent on the folly of ministers or on the events of war. Adieu.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 24th, 1778.

Upon reviewing your papers, dear sir, I think I can make more of them than I at first conceived. I have even commenced the life, and do not dislike my ideas for it, if the execution does but answer. At present I am interrupted by another task, which you too have wished me to undertake. In a word, somebody has published Chatterton's works, and charged me heavily for having discountenanced him. He even calls for the indignation of the public against me. It is somewhat singular, that I am to be offered up as a victim at the altar of a notorious impostor! but as many saints have been impostors, so many innocent persons have been sacrificed to them. However, I shall not be patient under this attack, but shall publish an answer — the narrative I mentioned to you.

I would, as you know, have avoided entering into this affair if I could; but as I do not despise public esteem, it is necessary to show how groundless the accusation is. Do not speak of my intention, as perhaps I shall not execute it immediately.

I am not in the least acquainted with the Mr. Bridges you mention, nor know that I ever saw him.

The tomb for Mr. Gray is actually erected, and at the generous expense of Mr. Mason, and with an epitaph of four lines, as you heard, and written by him — but the scaffolds are not yet removed.

I was in town yesterday, and intended to visit it, but there is digging a vault for the family of Northumberland, which obstructs the removal of the boards.

I rejoice in your amendment, and reckon it among my obligations to the fine weather, and hope it will be the most lasting of them.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 15th, 1778.

YOUR observation of Rowley not being mentioned by William of Wyrcestre, is very strong indeed, dear sir, and I shall certainly take notice of it. It has suggested to me, that he is not named by Bale or Pitts — is he? Will you trouble yourself to look? I conclude he is not, or we should have heard of it. Rowley is the reverse of king Arthur, and all those heroes that have been ex-

pected a second time; he is to come again for the first time — I mean, as a great poet. My defence amounts to thirty pages of the size of this paper: yet I believe, I shall not publish it. I abhor a controversy, and what is it to me whether people believe in an impostor or not? Nay, shall I convince every body of my innocence, though there is not the shadow of reason for thinking I was to blame? If I met a beggar in the street, and refused him sixpence, thinking him strong enough to work, and two years afterwards he should die of drinking, might not I be told I had deprived the world of a capital rope dancer? in short, to show one's self sensible to such accusations, would only invite more; and since they accuse me of contempt, I will have it for my accusers.

My brass plate for bishop Walpole was copied exactly from the print in Dart's Westminster, of the tomb of Robert Dalby, bishop of Durham, with the sole alteration of the name. I shall return, as soon as I have time, to Mr. Baker's life, but I shall want to consult you, or at least the account of him in the new Biographia, as your notes want some dates. I am not satisfied yet with what I have sketched; but I shall correct it. My small talent was grown very dull.

This attack about Chatterton, has a little revived it; but it warns me to have done; for, if

one comes to want provocatives, the produce will soon be feeble. Adieu.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 21, 1778.

I THINK it so very uncertain whether this letter will find you, that I write it merely to tell you I received yours to-day.

I recollect nothing particularly worth seeing in Sussex that you have not seen (for I think you have seen Coudray and Stansted, and I know you have Petworth), but Hurst Monceaux near Battle; and I don't know whether it is not pulled down. The site of Arundel-castle is fine, and there are some good tombs of the Fitzalans at the church, but little remains of the castle; in the room of which is a modern brick house; and in the late duke's time the ghost of a giant walked there his grace said—but I suppose the present duke has laid it in the Red Sea — of claret.

Beside Knowle and Penshurst, I should think there were several seats of old families in Kent worth seeing; but I do not know them. I poked out Summer-hill for the sake of the *Babylonienne* in Grammont; but it is now a mere farm-house.

Don't let them persuade you to visit Leeds-castle, which is not worth seeing.

You have been near losing me and half a dozen fair cousins to-day. The Goldsmiths' company dined in Mr. Shirley's field, next to Pope's. I went to Ham with my three Waldegrave nieces and miss Keppel, and saw them land, and dine in tents erected for them from the opposite shore. You may imagine how beautiful the sight was in such a spot and in such a day! I stayed and dined at Ham, and after dinner lady Dysart with lady Bridget Tollemache took our four nieces on the water to see the return of the barges, but were to set me down at lady Browne's. We were, with a footman and the two watermen, ten in a little boat. As we were in the middle of the river, a larger boat full of people drove directly upon us on purpose. I believe they were drunk. We called to them, to no purpose; they beat directly against the middle of our little skiff — but, thank you, did not do us the least harm — no thanks to them. Lady Malpas was in lord Strafford's garden, and gave us for gone. In short, Neptune never would have had so beautiful a prize as the four girls.

I hear an express has been sent to * * * * to offer him the mastership of the horse. I had a mind to make you guess, but you never can —— to lord Exeter.

Pray let me know the moment you return to Park-place.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 22, 1778.

I BEG you will feel no uneasiness, dear sir, at having shown my name to Dr. Glyn. I can never suspect you, who are giving me fresh proofs of your friendship, and solicited for my reputation, of doing any thing unkind. It is true I do not think I shall publish any thing about Chatterton. Is not it an affront to Innocence, not to be perfectly satisfied in her? My pamphlet, for such it would be, is four times as large as the narrative in your hands, and I think would not discredit me—but, in truth, I am grown much fonder of truth than fame; and scribblers or their patrons shall not provoke me to sacrifice the one to the other. Lord Hardwicke, I know, has long been my enemy,—latterly; to get a sight of the Conway papers, he has paid great court to me, which, to show how little I regarded his enmity, I let him see, at least the most curious. But as I set as little value on his friendship, I did not grant another of his requests. Indeed, I have made more than one foe by not indulging the variety of those

who have made application to me; and I am obliged to them, when they augment my contempt by quarrelling with me for that refusal. It was the case of Mr. Masters, and is now of lord Hardwicke. He solicited me to reprint his Bœotian volume of sir Dudley Carleton's papers, for which he had two motives. The first he inherited from his father, the desire of saving money; for though his fortune is so much larger than mine, he knew I would not let out my press for hire, but should treat him with the expense, as I have done for those I have obliged. The second was, that the rarity of my editions makes them valuable, and though I cannot make men read dull books, I can make them purchase them. His lordship, therefore, has bad grace in affecting to overlook one, whom he had in vain courted, yet he again is grown my enemy, because I would not be my own. For my writings, they do not depend on him or the venal authors he patronizes (I doubt very frugally), but on their own merits or demerits. It is from men of sense they must expect their sentence, not from boobies and hireling authors, whom I have always shunned, with the whole fry of minor wits, critics, and monthly censors. I have not seen the Review you mention, nor ever do, but when something particular is pointed out to me. Literary squabbles I know preserve one's name, when one's work will not; but I despise the fame that depends on scolding,

till one is remembered, and remembered by whom? The scavengers of literature! Reviewers are like sextons, who in a charnel-house can tell you to what John Thompson or to what Tom Matthews such a scull or such belonged — but who wishes to know? The fame that is only to be found in such vaults, is like the fires that burn unknown in tombs, and go out as fast as they are discovered. Lord Hardwicke is welcome to live among the dead if he likes it, and can contrive to live no where else.

Chatterton did abuse me under the title of Baron of Otranto, but unluckily the picture is more like Dr. Milles and Chatterton's own devotees, than to me, who am but a recreant antiquary, and as the poor lad found by experience, did not swallow every fragment that was offered to me as antique; though that is a feature he has bestowed upon me.

I have seen too the criticism you mention on the Castle of Otranto, in the preface to the Old English Baron. It is not at all oblique, but though mixed with high compliments, directly attacks the visionary part, which, says the author or authoress, makes one laugh. I do assure you, I have not had the smallest inclination to return that attack. It would even be ungrateful, for the work is a professed imitation of mine, only stripped of the marvellous—and so entirely stripped, except in one awkward attempt at a ghost or two,

that it is the most insipid dull nothing you ever saw. It certainly does not make one laugh; for what makes one doze, seldom makes one merry.

I am very sorry to have talked for near three pages on what relates to myself, who should be of no consequence, if people did not make me so, whether I will or not. My not replying to them, I hope is a proof I do not seek to make myself the topic of conversation.—How very foolish are the squabbles of authors! They buzz and are troublesome to-day, and then repose for ever on some shelf in a college library, close by their antagonists, like Henry VI. and Edward IV. at Windsor.

I shall be in town in a few days, and will send you the heads of painters, which I left there; and along with them for yourself a translation of a French play, that I have just printed there. It is not for your reading, but as one of the Strawberry editions, and one of the rarest, for I have printed but seventy-five copies.

It was to oblige lady Craven, the translatress; and will be an aggravation of my offence to Sir Dudley's State Papers.

I hope this Elysian summer, for it has been above Indian, has dispersed all your complaints. Yet it does not agree with fruit; the peaches and nectarines are shrivelled to the size of damsins, and half of them drop. Yet you remember what portly bellies the peaches had at Paris, where it is generally as hot. I suppose our fruit trees are so

accustomed to rain, that they don't know how to behave without it. Adieu.

Yours ever.

P. S. I can divert you with a new adventure, that has happened to me in the literary way. About a month ago, I received a letter from a Mr. Jonathan Scott, at Shrewsbury, to tell me he was possessed of a MS. of lord Herbert's Account of the Court of France, which he designed to publish by subscription, and which he desired me to subscribe to, and to assist in the publication. I replied, that having been obliged to the late lord Powis and his widow, I could not meddle with any such thing, without knowing that it had the consent of the present earl and his mother.

Another letter, commending my reserve, told me Mr. Scott had applied for it formerly, and would again now. This showed me they did not consent. I have just received a third letter, owning the approbation is not yet arrived, but to keep me employed in the mean time, the modest Mr. Scott, whom I never saw, nor know more of than I did of Chatterton, proposes to me to get his fourth son a place in the civil department in India; the father not choosing it should be in the military, his three elder sons being engaged in that branch already.—If this fourth son breaks his neck, I suppose it will be laid to my charge!

P. S. 25th. I shall send the prints to the coach to-morrow.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

September 1, 1778.

I have now seen the Critical Review, with lord Hardwicke's note, in which I perceive the sensibility of your friendship for me, dear sir, but no rudeness on his part. Contemptuous it was to reprint Jane Shore's letter without any notice of my having given it before; the apology too is not made to me — but I am not affected by such incivilities, that imply more ill-will than boldness. As I expected more from your representation, I believe I expressed myself with more warmth than the occasion deserved; and as I love to be just, I will, now I am perfectly cool, be so to lord H. His dislike of me was meritorious in him, as I conclude it was founded on my animosity to *his* father, as mine had been, from attachment to *my own*, who was basely betrayed by the late earl. The present has given me formerly many peevish marks of enmity; and I suspect, I don't know if justly, that he was the mover of the cabal in the Antiquarian Society against me — but all their understandings were of a size that made me smile rather than provoke me. The earl, as I told you,

has since been rather wearisome in applications to me, which I received very civilly, but encouraged no farther. When he wanted me to be his printer, I own I was not good Christian enough, not to be pleased with refusing, and yet in as well-bred excuses as I could form, pleading, what was true at the time, as you know, that I had laid down my press—but so much for this idle story. I shall think no more of it, but adhere to my pacific system. The antiquarians will be as ridiculous as they used to be; and since it is impossible to infuse taste into them, they will be as dry and dull as their predecessors. One may revive what perished, but it will perish again, if more life is not breathed into it than it enjoyed originally. Facts, dates, and names will never please the multitude, unless there is some style and manner to recommend them, and unless some novelty is struck out from their appearance. The best merits of the Society lies in their prints; for their volumes, no mortal will ever touch them but an antiquary. Their Saxon and Danish discoveries are not worth more than monuments of the Hottentots, and for Roman remains in Britain, they are upon a foot with what ideas we should get of Inigo Jones, if somebody was to publish views of huts and houses that our officers run up at Senegal and Goree. Bishop Lyttleton used to torment me with barrows and Roman camps, and I would as soon have attended to the turf graves in our church-

yards. I have no curiosity to know how awkward and clumsy men have been in the dawn of arts, or in their decay.

I exempt you entirely from my general censure on antiquaries, both for your singular modesty in publishing nothing yourself, and for collecting stone and brick for others to build with. I wish your materials may ever fall into good hands—perhaps they will! our empire is falling to pieces! we are relapsing to a little island. In that state men are apt to inquire how great their ancestors have been; and, when a kingdom is past doing any thing, the few, that are studious, look into the memorials of past time; nations, like private persons, seek lustre from their progenitors, when they have none in themselves, and the further they are from the dignity of their source. When half its colleges are tumbled down, the ancient university of Cambridge will revive from your collections, and you will be quoted as a living witness that saw its splendour.

Since I began this letter, I have had another curious adventure. I was in the Holbein chamber, when a chariot stopped at my door. A letter was brought up—and who should be below but—Dr. Kippis. The letter was to announce himself and his business, flattered me on my writings, desired my assistance, and particularly my direction and aid for his writing the life of my father. I

desired he would walk up, and received him very civilly, taking not the smallest notice of what you had told me of his flirts at me in the new Biographia.

I told him, if I had been applied to I could have pointed out many errors in the old edition, but as they were chiefly in the printing, I supposed they would be corrected. With regard to my father's life, I said, it might be partiality, but I had such confidence in my father's virtues, that I was satisfied the more his life was examined, the clearer they would appear. That I also thought that the life of any man written under the direction of his family, did nobody honour; and that as I was persuaded my father's would stand the test, I wished that none of his relations should interfere in it. That I did not doubt but the doctor would speak impartially, and that was all I desired. He replied, that he did suppose I thought in that manner, and that all he asked was to be assisted in facts and dates. I said, if he would please to write the life first, and then communicate it to me, I would point out any errors in facts that I should perceive. He seemed mightily well satisfied—and so we parted—but is not it odd, that people are continually attacking me, and then come to me for assistance?—but when men write for profit, they are not very delicate.

I have resumed Mr. Baker's life, and pretty

well arranged my plan, but I shall have little time to make any progress till October, as I am going soon to make some visits.

I hope you have received the heads of the painters.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 18, 1778.

I WRITE a few words to satisfy you, dear sir, that I received both your letters together. If I did not mention them, you might think the franked one had strayed.

I rejoice that the heat of the weather has been so serviceable to you, and I hope the little return of tenderness in your feet will not last, as the season continues so dry.

I have run through the new articles in the Biographia, and think them performed but by a heavy hand. Some persons have not trusted the characters of their ancestors, as I did my father's, to their own merits. On the contrary, I have met with one whose corruption is attempted to be palliated by imputing its punishment to the revenge of *my father* — which, by the way, is confessing the guilt of the convict.

This was the late lord Barrington, who, I be-

lieve, was a very dirty fellow; for, besides being expelled the House of Commons on the affair of Harburg lottery, he was reckoned to have twice sold the dissenters to the court; but in short, what credit can a Biographia Britannica, which ought to be a standard work, deserve, when the editor is a mercenary writer, who runs about to relations for directions, and adopts any tale they deliver to him? This very instance is a proof that it is not a jot more credible than a peerage. The authority is said to be a nephew of judge Foster (consequently, I suppose, a friend of judge Barrington), and he pretends to have found a scrap of paper, nobody knows on what occasion written, that seems to be connected with nothing, and is called a palliative, if not an excuse of lord B * * * *'s crime.

A man is expelled from parliament for a scandalous job, and it is called a sufficient excuse to say the minister was his enemy; and this near forty years after the death of both! and without any impeachment of the justice of the sentence: instead of which we are told that lord B. was *suspected* of having offended sir R. W. who took that opportunity of being revenged. Supposing he did, which at most you see is a suspicion grounded on a suspicion, it would at least imply that he had found a good opportunity—a most admirable acquittal! Sir R. Walpole was expelled for having indorsed a note that was not for his own benefit,

nor ever supposed to be, and it was the act of a whole outrageous party; yet, abandoned as parliaments sometimes are, a minister would not find them very complaisant in gratifying his private revenge against a member without some notorious crime. Not a syllable is said of any defence the culprit made; and had my father been guilty of such violence and injustice, it is totally incredible that he, whose minutest acts and his most innocent, were so rigorously scrutinised, tortured, and blackened, should never have heard that act of power complained of. The present lord Barrington who opposed him saw his fall, and the secret committee appointed to canvass his life, when a retrospect of twenty years was desired, and only ten allowed, would certainly have pleaded for the longer term, had he had any thing to say in behalf of his father's sentence. Would so warm a patriot then, though so obedient a courtier now, have suppressed the charge to this hour? This lord B. when I was going to publish the second edition of my noble authors, begged it as a favour of me to suppress all mention of his father—a strong presumption that he was ashamed of him—I am well repaid! but I am certainly now at liberty to record that good man. I shall—and shall take notice of the satisfactory manner in which his sons have whitewashed their patriarch!

I recollect a saying of the present peer that will divert you when contrasted with forty years of ser-

vility, which even in this age makes him a proverb. It was in his days of virtue. He said "if I should ever be so unhappy as to have a place that would make it necessary for me to have a fine coat on a birth day, I would pin a bank bill on my sleeve."—he had a place in less than two years I think—and has had almost every place that every administration could bestow. Such were the patriots that opposed that excellent man, my father; allowed by all parties to have been as incapable of revenge as ever minister was—but whose experience of mankind drew from him that memorable saying, "that very few men ought to be prime ministers, for it is not fit many should know how bad men are" one can see a little of it without being a prime minister. If one shuns mankind and flies to books, one meets with their meanness and falsehood there too! one has reason to say, there is but one good, that is God.—Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

October 14, 1778.

I THINK you take in no newspapers, nor I believe condescend to read any more modern than the *Paris à la Main* at the time of the *Ligue*—consequently you have not seen a new scandal on my

father, which you will not wonder offends me. You cannot be interested in his defence, but as it comprehends some very curious anecdotes, you will not grudge my indulging myself to a friend in vindicating a name so dear to me.

In the accounts of lady Chesterfield's death and fortune, it is said that the late king, at the instigation of sir R. W. burnt his father's will, which contained a large legacy to that his supposed daughter, and I believe his real one, for she was very like him, as her brother, general Schulembourg, is in black, to the late king. The fact of suppressing the will is indubitably true, the instigator most false, as I can demonstrate thus:—

When the news arrived of the death of George I., my father carried the account from lord Townshend to the then prince of Wales. One of the first acts of royalty is for the new monarch to make a speech to the privy council. Sir Robert asked the king who he would please to have draw the speech, which was, in fact, asking, who was to be prime minister; to which his majesty replied, sir Spencer Compton. It is a wonderful anecdote, and but little known, that the new premier, a very dull man, could not draw the speech, and the person to whom he applied was the deposed premier. The queen, who favoured my father, observed how unfit a man was for successor, who was reduced to beg assistance of his predecessor. The council met as soon as possible, the next morning at latest.

There archbishop Wake, with whom one copy of the will had been deposited, (as another was, I think, with the duke of Wolfenbuttle, who had a pension for sacrificing it, which, *I know*, the late duke of Newcastle transacted,) advanced, and delivered the will to the king, who put it into his pocket, and went out of council without opening it, the archbishop not having courage or presence of mind to desire it to be read, as he ought to have done.

These circumstances, which I solemnly assure you are strictly true, prove that my father neither advised, nor was consulted; nor is it credible that the king in one night's time should have passed from the intention of disgracing him, to make him his bosom confident on so delicate an affair.

I was once talking to the late lady Suffolk, the former mistress, on that extraordinary event. She said, "I cannot justify the deed to the legatees, but towards his father, the late king was justifiable, for George I. had burnt two wills made in favour of George II." I suppose they were the testaments of the duke and duchess of Zell, parents of George I.'s wife, whose treatment of her they always resented.

I said *I know* the transactions of the duke of N. The late lord Waldegrave showed me a letter from that duke to the first earl of Waldegrave, then ambassador at Paris, with directions about that transaction, or, at least, about payment of the pension, I forget which. I have somewhere, but cannot

turn to it now, a memorandum of that affair, and who the prince was, whom I may mistake in calling duke of Wolfenbuttle. There was a third copy of the will, I likewise forget with whom deposited.

The newspaper says, which is true, that lord Chesterfield filed a bill in chancery against the late king to oblige him to produce the will, and was silenced, I think, by payment of 20,000*l*. There was another legacy to his own daughter the queen of Prussia, which has at times been, and, I believe, is still claimed by the king of Prussia.

Do not mention any part of this story, but it is worth preserving, as I am sure you are satisfied with my scrupulous veracity. It may perhaps be authenticated hereafter by collateral evidence that may come out. If ever true history does come to light, my father's character will have just honour paid to it. Lord Chesterfield, one of his sharpest enemies, has not, with all his prejudices, left a very unfavourable account of him, and it would alone be raised by a comparison of their two characters. Think of one who calls sir Robert the corrupter of youth, leaving a system of education to poison them from their nursery! Chesterfield, Pulteney, and Bolingbroke were the saints that reviled my father!

I beg your pardon, but you will allow me to open my heart to you when it is full.

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

October 23, 1778.

* * * * * * HAVING thus told you all I know, I shall add a few words, to say I conclude you have known as much, by my not having heard from you. Should the post-office or secretary's office set their wits at work to bring to light all the intelligence contained under the above hiatus, I am confident they will discover nothing, though it gives an exact description of all they have been about themselves.

My personal history is very short. I have had an assembly and the rheumatism—and am buying a house—and it rains—and I shall plant the roses against my treillage to-morrow. Thus you know what I have done, suffered, am doing, and shall do. Let me know as much of you, in quantity, not in quality. Introductions to and conclusions of letters are as much out of fashion, as *to*, *at*, &c. on letters. This sublime age reduces every thing to its quintessence: all periphrases and expletives are so much in disuse, that I suppose soon the only way of making love will be to say "*Lie down.*" Luckily, the lawyers will not part with any synonymous words, and will, consequently, preserve the redundancies of our language—Dixi.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

October 26, 1778.

Mr. Kerrick shall have a ticket, dear sir, to see Strawberry whenever he wishes for it next spring.

I have finished the Life of Mr. Baker, will have it transcribed, and send it to you. I have omitted several little particulars—that are in your notes, for two reasons; one, because so much is said in the Biographia, and the other, because I have rather drawn a character of him, than meant a circumstantial life. In the justice I have done to him, I trust I shall have pleased you. I have much greater doubt of that effect in what I have said of his principles and party. It is odd, perhaps, to have made use of the life of a high churchman for expatiating on my own very opposite principles, but it gave me so fair an opportunity of discussing those points, that I very naturally embraced it. I have done due honour to his immaculate conscience, but have not spared the cause in which he fell, or rather rose, for the ruin of his fortune was the triumph of his virtue.

As you know I do not love the press, you may be sure I have no thoughts of printing this life at present; nay, I beg you will not only not communicate it, but take care it never should be printed without my consent. I have written what presented itself; I should perhaps choose to soften

several passages; and I trust it to you for your own satisfaction, not as a finished thing, or as I am determined it should remain.

Another favour I beg of you is to criticise it as largely and severely as you please: you have a right so to do, as it is built with your own materials; nay, you have a right to scold, if I have, nay, since I have employed them so differently from your intention. All my excuse is, that you communicated them to one who did not deceive you, and who you was pretty sure would make nearly the use of them that he has made. Was not you? did not you suspect a little that I could not write even a Life of Mr. Baker without talking Whiggism!—Well, if I have ill-treated the cause, I am sure I have exalted the martyr. I have thrown new light on his virtue from his notes on the Gazettes, and you will admire him more, though you may love me less, for my chymistry. I should be truly sorry if I did lose a scruple of your friendship. You have ever been as candid to me, as Mr. Baker was to his antagonists, and our friendship is another proof that men of the most opposite principles can agree in every thing else, and not quarrel about them.

As my MS. contains above twenty pages of my writing on larger paper than this, you cannot receive it speedily—however, I have performed my promise, and I hope you will not be totally discontent, though I am not satisfied with myself. I have executed by snatches and by long interruptions;

and not having been eager about it, I find I wanted that ardour to inspire me; another proof of what I told you, that my small talent is waning, and wants provocatives. It shall be a warning to me. Adieu!

P. S. I have long had a cast of one part of the great seal of queen Henrietta, that you mention, as you may find in the catalogue of Strawberry in the green closet. It is her figure under a canopy.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Nov. 4, 1778.

You will see by my secretary's hand that I am not able to write myself; indeed, I am in bed with the gout in six places, like Daniel in the den; but as the lions are slumbering round me, and leave me a moment of respite, I employ it to give you one. You have misunderstood me, dear sir; I have not said a word that will lower Mr. Baker's character; on the contrary, I think he will come out brighter from my ordeal. In truth, as I have drawn out his life from your papers, it is a kind of political epic, in which his conscience is the hero that always triumphs over his interest upon the most opposite occasions. Shall you dislike your saint in this light?

I had transcribed about half when I fell ill last

week. If the gout does not seize my right hand, I shall probably have full leisure to finish it during my recovery, but shall certainly not be able to send it to you by Mr. Lort.

Your promise fully satisfies me. My life can never extend to twenty years. Any one that saw me this moment would not take me for a Methusalem. I have not strength to dictate more now, except to add, that if Mr. Nicholls has seen my narrative about Chatterton, it can only be my letter to Mr. B * * *, of which you have a copy; the larger one has not yet been out of my own house.

I am, dear sir,

Yours most sincerely.

P. S. I forgot to say that you certainly shall have every scrap of your MSS. carefully returned to you; and you will find that I have barely sipped here and there, and exhausted nothing.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Jan. 3, 1779.

AT last, after ten weeks, I have been able to remove hither, in hopes change of air and the frost will assist my recovery; though I am not one of those ancients that forget the register, and

think they are to be as well as ever after every fit of illness. As yet I can barely creep about the room in the middle of the day.

I have made my printer (now my secretary) copy out the rest of Mr. Baker's life, for my own hands will barely serve to write necessary letters, and complains even of them. If you know of any very trusty person passing between London and Cambridge, I would send it to you, but should not care to trust it by the coach, nor to any giddy undergraduate that comes to town to see a play; and besides, I mean to return you your own notes. I will say no more than I have said in my apology to you for the manner in which I have written this life. With regard to Mr. Baker himself, I am confident you will find that I have done full justice to his work and character. I do not expect you to approve the inferences I draw against some other persons—and yet, if his conduct was meritorious, it would not be easy to excuse those who were *active* after doing what he would not do. You will not understand this sentence till you have seen the Life. I hope you have not been untiled or unpaled by the tempest on new-year's morning. I have lost two beautiful elms in a row before my windows here, and had the sky-light demolished in town. Lady Pomfret's Gothic house in my street lost one of the stone towers, like those at King's chapel, and it was beaten through the roof. The top of our cross too at

Ampthill was thrown down, as I hear from lady Ossory this morning. I remember to have been told that bishop Kidder and his wife were killed in their bed in the palace of Gloucester in 1709, and yet his heirs were sued for dilapidations.

Lord de Ferrers, who deserves his ancient honours, is going to repair the castle at Tamworth, and has flattered me that he will consult me. He has a violent passion for ancestry—and, consequently, I trust will not stake the patrimony of the Ferrarii, Townshends, and Comptons, at the hazard table. A little pride would not hurt our nobility, cock and hen. Adieu, dear sir; send me a good account of yourself.

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Jan. 9, 1779.

YOUR flight to Bath would have much surprised me, if Mr. C., who, I think, heard it from Stanley, had not prepared me for it. Since you was amused, I am glad you went, especially as you escaped being initiated in Mrs. Miller's follies at Bath Easton, which you would have mentioned. She would certainly have sent some trapes of a muse to press you, had she known what good epigrams you write.

I went to Strawberry partly out of prudence, partly from *ennui*. I thought it best to air myself before I go in and out of hot rooms here, and had my house thoroughly warmed for a week previously, and then only stirred from the red room to the blue on the same floor. I stayed five days, and was neither the better nor the worse for it. I was quite tired with having neither company, books, nor amusement of any kind. Either from the emptiness of the town, or that ten weeks of gout have worn out the patience of all my acquaintance, but I do not see three persons in three days. This gives me but an uncomfortable prospect for my latter days: it is but probable that I may be a cripple in a fit or two more, if I have strength to go through them; and as that will be long life, one outlives one's acquaintance. I cannot make new acquaintance, nor interest myself at all about the young, except those that belong to me; nor does that go beyond contributing to their pleasures, without having much satisfaction in their conversation——But—one must take every thing as it comes, and make the best of it. I have had a much happier life than I deserve, and than millions that deserve better. I should be very weak if I could not bear the uncomfortableness of old age, when I can afford what comforts it is capable of. How many poor old people have none of them! I am ashamed whenever I am peevish, and recollect that I have fire and servants to help me.

I hear admiral Keppel is in high spirits with the great respect and zeal expressed for him. In my own opinion, his constitution will not stand the struggle. I am very uneasy too for the duke of R * * * *, who is at Portsmouth, and will be at least as much agitated.

Sir * * * * * * has written a large pamphlet, and a very good one. It is to show, that whenever the Grecian republics taxed their dependents, the latter resisted, and shook off the yoke. He has printed but twelve copies: the duke of G * * * sent me one of them. There is an anecdote of my father, on the authority of old Jack White, which I doubt. It says, he would not go on with the excise scheme, though his friends advised it. I cannot speak to the particular event, as I was then at school; but it was more like him to have yielded against his sentiments, to Mr. Pelham and his candid—or say, plausible and timid friends. I have heard him say, that he never did give up his opinion to such men but he always repented it. However, the anecdote in the book would be more to his honour. But what a strange man is sir * * * ! I suppose now he has written this book, he will change his opinion, and again be for carrying on the war — or, if he does not know his own mind for two years together, why will he take places, to make every body doubt his honesty?

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

January 15, 1779.

I SEND you by Dr. Jacob, as you desired, my life of Mr. Baker, and with it your own materials. I beg you will communicate my MS. to nobody—but, if you think it worth your trouble, I will consent to your transcribing it—but on one condition, and a silly one for me to exact, who am as old as you, and broken to pieces, and very unlikely to survive you; but should so improbable a thing happen, I must exact that you will keep your transcript sealed up, with orders written on the cover to be restored to me in case of an accident, for I should certainly dislike very much to see it printed without my consent.

I should not think of your copying it, if you did not love to *transcribe*, and sometimes things of as little value as my MS. I shall beg to have it returned to me by a safe hand as soon as you can, for I have nothing but the foul copy, which nobody can read, I believe, but I and my secretary.

I am actually printing my justification about Chatterton, but only two hundred copies to give away; for I hate calling in the whole town to a fray, of which otherwise probably not one thousand persons would ever hear.

You shall have a copy as soon as ever it is finished, which my printer says will be in three weeks.

You know my printer is my secretary too: do not imagine I am giving myself airs of a numerous household of officers. I shall be glad to see the letter of Mr. Baker you mentioned. You will perceive two or three notes in my MS. in a different hand from mine, or that of my *amanuensis*, (still the same officer) they were added by a person I lent it to, and I have effaced part of the last.

I must finish lest Dr. Jacob should call, and my parcel not be ready. I hope your sore throat is gone; my gout has returned again a little with taking the air only, but did not stay—however, I am still confined, and almost ready to remain so, to prevent disappointment.

Yours most sincerely,

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, Jan. 28, 1779.

I write in as much hurry as you did, dear sir, and thank you for the motive of yours: mine is to prevent your fatiguing yourself in copying my MS. for which I am not in the least haste: pray keep it till another safe conveyance presents itself. You may bring the gout, that is I am sorry to hear, flying about you, into your hand, by wearying it.

How can you tell me I may well be cautious about my MS. and yet advise me to print it?—no—I shall not provoke nests of hornets, till I am dust, as they will be too.

If I dictated tales when ill in my bed, I must have been worse than I thought; for, as I know nothing of it, I must have been light-headed. Mr. Lort was certainly misinformed, though he seems to have told you the story kindly to the honour of my philosophy or spirits—but I had rather have no fame than what I do not deserve.

I am fretful or low-spirited at times in the gout, like other weak old men, and have less to boast than most men. I have some strange things in my drawer, even wilder than the Castle of Otranto, and called Hieroglyphic Tales—but they were not written lately, nor in the gout, nor, whatever they may seem, written when I was out of my senses. I showed one or two of them to a person since my recovery, who may have mentioned them, and occasioned Mr. Lort's misintelligence. I did not at all perceive that the latter looked ill; and hope he is quite recovered. You shall see Chatterton soon. Adieu!

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

February 4, 1779.

I have received the MS., and though you forbid my naming the subject more, I love truth, and truth in a friend so much, that I must tell you, that so far from taking your sincerity ill, I had much rather you should act with your native honest sincerity than say you was pleased with my MS. I have always tried as much as is in human nature to divest myself of the self-love of an author; in the present case I had less difficulty than ever, for I never thought my life of Mr. Baker one of my least indifferent works. You might, believe me, have sent me your long letter, whatever it contained; it would not have made a momentary cloud between us. I have not only friendship, but great gratitude for you, for a thousand instances of kindness — and should detest any writing of mine that made a breach with a friend, and still more, if it could make me forget obligations.

I am,

Yours most cordially,

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

February 18, 1779.

I sent you my Chattertoniad last week, in hopes it would sweeten your pouting; but I find it has not, or has miscarried; for you have not acknowledged the receipt with your usual punctuality.

Have you seen Hasted's new History of Kent? I am sailing through it, but am stopped every minute by careless mistakes. They tell me the author has good materials, but is very negligent; and so I perceive. He has not even given a list of monuments in the churches, which I do not remember in any history of a county — but he is rich in pedigrees; though I suppose they have many errors too, as I have found some in those I am acquainted with. It is unpardonable to be inaccurate in a work in which one nor expects nor demands any thing but fidelity.

We have a great herald arising in a very noble race, lord de Ferrars. I hope to make him a Gothic architect too, for he is going to repair Tamworth Castle, and flatters me that I shall give him sweet counsel. I enjoin him to Kernellare. Adieu!

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, March 28, 1779.

Your last called for no answer; and I have so little to tell you, that I only write to-day to avoid the air of remissness. I came hither on Friday, for this last week has been too hot to stay in London; but March is arrived this morning with his north-easterly malice, and I suppose will assert his old style claim to the third of April. The poor infant apricots will be the victim to that Herod of the almanack. I have been much amused with new travels through Spain by a Mr. Swinburne — at least with the Alhambra, of the inner parts of which there are two beautiful prints. The Moors were the most polished, and had most taste of any people in the Gothic ages; and I hate the knave Ferdinand and his bigoted queen for destroying them. These new travels are simple, and do tell you a little more than late voyagers, by whose accounts one would think there was nothing in Spain but muleteers and fandangos. — In truth, there does not seem to be much worth seeing but prospects — and those, unless I were a bird, I would never visit, when the accommodations are so wretched.

Mr. Cumberland has given the town a masque, called Calypso, which is a prodigy of dulness. Would you believe, that such a sentimental writer

would be so gross as to make cantharides one of the ingredients of a love potion for enamouring Telemachus? If you think I exaggerate, here are the lines:

> "To these, the hot Hispanian fly
> Shall bid his languid pulse beat high."

Proteus and Antiope are Minerva's missioners for securing the prince's virtue, and in recompense they are married and crowned king and queen!

I have bought at Hudson's sale a fine design of a chimney-piece, by Holbein, for Henry VIII. — If I had a room left, I would erect. It is certainly not so Gothic as that in my Holbein room; but there is a great deal of taste for that bastard style; perhaps it was executed at Nonsuch. I do intend, under Mr. Essex's inspection, to begin my offices next spring. — It is late in my day, I confess, to return to brick and mortar; but I shall be glad to perfect my plan, or the next possessor will marry my castle to a Doric stable. There is a perspective through two or three rooms in the Alhambra, that might easily be improved into Gothic, though there seems but small affinity between them; and they might be finished within with Dutch tiles, and painting, or bits of ordinary marble, as there must be gilding. Mosaic seems to be their chief ornaments, for walls, ceilings, and floors. Fancy must sport in the furniture,

and mottos might be gallant, and would be very Arabesque. I would have a mixture of colours, but with a strict attention to harmony and taste; and some one should predominate, as supposing it the favourite colour of the lady who was sovereign of the knight's affections who built the house. Carpets are classically Mahometans, and fountains—but, alas! our climate till last summer was never romantic! Were I not so old I would at least build a Moorish novel—for you see my head runs on Granada—and by taking the most picturesque parts of the Mahometan and catholic religions, and with the mixture of African and Spanish names, one might make something very agreeable—at least I will not give the hint to Mr. Cumberland. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 12, 1779.

As your gout was so concise, I will not condole on it, but I am sorry you are liable to it if you do but take the air. Thank you for telling me of the vendible curiosities at the alderman's. For St. Peter's portraits to hang to a fairie's watch. I shall not think of it, both as I do not believe it very like, and as it is composed of invisible writing, for which

my eyes are not young enough. In truth, I have almost left off making purchases; I have neither room for any thing more, nor inclination for them, as I reckon every thing very dear when one has so little time to enjoy it. However, I cannot say but the plates by Rubens do tempt me a little—yet, as I do not care to buy even Rubens in a poke, I should wish to know if the alderman would let me see if it were but one. Would he be persuaded? I would pay for the carriage, though I should not buy them.

Lord de Ferrars will be infinitely happy with the sight of the pedigree, and I will certainly tell him of it, and how kind you are.

Strype's account, or rather Stow's of Richard's person is very remarkable—but I have done with endeavouring at truth. Weeds grow more naturally than what one plants. I hear your Cantabrigians are still unshaken Chattertonians. Many men are about falsehood like girls about the first man that makes love to them: a handsomer, a richer, or even a sincerer lover cannot eradicate the first impression—but a sillier swain, or a sillier legend, sometimes gets into the head of the miss or the learned man, and displaces the antecedent folly. Truth's kingdom is not of this world.

I do not know whether our clergy are growing Mahometans or not: they certainly are not what they profess themselves—but as you and I should not agree perhaps in assigning the same defects to

them, I will not enter on a subject which I have promised you to drop. All I allude to now is, the shocking murder of miss Ray by a divine. In my own opinion we are growing more fit for Bedlam, than for Mahomet's paradise. The poor criminal in question, I am persuaded is mad—and the misfortune is, the law does not know how to define the shades of madness; and thus there are twenty out-pensioners of Bedlam, for one that is confined. You, dear sir, have chosen a wiser path to happiness by depending on yourself for amusement. Books and past ages draw one into no scrapes, and perhaps it is best not to know much of men till they are dead. I wish you health—you want nothing else.

Yours most truly.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 20, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received the plates very safely, but hope you nor the alderman will take it ill that I return them. They are extremely pretty and uncommonly well preserved—but I am sure they are not by Rubens, nor I believe after his designs, for I am persuaded they are older than his time. In truth, I have a great many of the same sort,

and do not wish for more. I shall send them back on Thursday by the Fly, and will beg you to inquire after them; and I trust they will arrive as safely as they did to,

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

April 23, 1779.

I ought not to trouble you so often when you are not well; but that is the very cause of my writing now. You left off abruptly from disorder, and therefore I wish to know it is gone.

The plates I hope got home safe. They are pretty, especially the reverses; but the drawing in general is bad.

Pray tell me what you mean by a *priced* catalogue of the pictures at Houghton. Is it a printed one? if it is, where is it to be had?—odd questions from *me*, and which I should not wish to have mentioned as coming from me. I have been told to-day that they are actually sold to the Czarina—*sic transit!* mortifying enough, were not every thing transitory! we must recollect that our griefs and pains are so, as well as our joys and glories; and, by balancing the account, a grain of comfort is to be extracted. Adieu! I

shall be heartily glad to receive a better account of you.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 21, 1779.

As Mr. Essex has told me that you still continue out of order, I am impatient to hear from yourself how you are. Do, send me a line: I hope it will be a satisfactory one.

Do you know that Dr. Ducarel has published a translation of a History of the Abbey of Bec! There is a pretty print to it; and one very curious circumstance, at least valuable to us disciples of *Alma Mater Etonensis*. The ram hunting was derived from the manor of Wrotham in Norfolk, which formerly belonged to Bec, and being forfeited, together with other alien priories, was bestowed by Henry VI. on our college. I do not repine at reading any book from which I can learn a single fact that I wish to know. For the lives of the abbots, they were, according to the author, all pinks of piety and holiness—but there are few other facts amusing, especially with regard to the customs of those savage times—especially that the empress Matilda was buried in a bull's hide, and afterwards had a tomb covered with

silver. There is another new book called *Sketches from Nature*, in two volumes, by Mr. G. Keate, in which I found one fact too, that, if authentic, is worth knowing. The work is an imitation of Sterne, and has a sort of merit, though nothing that arrives at originality.

For the foundation of the church of Reculver, he quotes a MS. said to be written by a Dominican friar of Canterbury, and preserved at Louvain. The story is evidently metamorphosed into a novel, and has very little of an antique air; but it affirms that the monkish author attests the beauty of Richard III. This is very absurd, if invention has nothing to do with the story: and therefore one should suppose it genuine. I have desired Dodsley to ask Mr. Keate, if there truly exists such a MS.—if there does—I own I wish he had printed it rather than his own production; for I agree with Mr. Gray, "that any man living may make a book worth reading, if he will but set down with truth what he has seen or heard, no matter whether the book is well written or not." Let those who can't write, glean.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, May 22, 1779.

If you hear of us no oftener than we of you, you will be as much behind hand in news as my lady Lyttelton. We have seen a traveller that saw you in your island,[1] but it sounds like hearing of Ulysses.—Well! we must be content. You are not only not dethroned, but owe the safety of your dominions to your own skill in fortification. If we do not hear of your extending your conquests, why, is it not less than all our modern heroes have done, whom prophets have foretold and gazettes celebrated—or who have foretold and celebrated themselves. Pray be content to be cooped up in an island that has no neighbours, when the Howes and Clintons, and Dunmores and Burgoynes and Campbells are not yet got beyond the great river—Inquiry![2] To-day's papers say, that the *little* prince of Orange[3] is to invade you again—but we trust sir James Wallace has clipped

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[1] Mr. Conway was now at his government, Jersey.

[2] The parliamentary inquiry which took place in the house of commons on the conduct of the American war.

[3] The prince of Nassau, who had commanded the attack upon Jersey, claiming relationship to the great house of Nassau, Mr. Walpole calls the "*little prince of Orange.*"

his wings so close, that they will not grow again this season, though he is so ready to *fly*.

Nothing material has happened since I wrote last — so, as every moment of a civil war is precious, every one has been turned to the interest of diversion. There have been three masquerades, an installation, and the ball of the knights at the Haymarket this week; not to mention Almack's, Festino, lady Spencer's, Ranelagh and Vauxhall, operas and plays. The duchess of Bolton too saw masks — so many, that the floor gave way, and the company in the dining-room were near falling on the heads of those in the parlour, and exhibiting all that has not yet appeared in Doctor's Commons. At the knights' ball was such a profusion of Strawberries, that people could hardly get into the supper-room. I could tell you more, but I do not love to exaggerate.

Lady Ailesbury told me this morning that lord Bristol has got a calf with two feet to each leg — I am convinced it is by the duchess of Kingston, who has two of every thing where others have but one.

Adieu!—I am going to sup with Mrs. Abington — and hope Mrs. Clive will not hear of it.

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 2, 1779.

I am most sincerely rejoiced, dear sir, that you find yourself at all better—and trust it is an omen of farther amendment. Mr. Essex surprised me by telling me, that you who keep yourself so warm and so numerously clothed, do yet sometimes, if the sun shines, sit and write in your garden for hours at a time. It is more than I should readily do, whose habitudes are so very different from yours. Your complaints seem to demand perspiration—but I do not venture to advise. I understand no constitution but my own, and should kill Milo, if I managed him as I treat myself. I sat in a window on Saturday, with the east wind blowing on my neck till near two in the morning—and it seems to have done me good, for I am better within these two days than I have been these six months. My spirits have been depressed, and my nerves so aspen, that the smallest noise disturbed me. To-day I do not feel a complaint; which is something at near sixty-two.

I don't know whether I have not misinformed you, nor am sure it was Dr. Ducarel who translated the account of the Abbey of Bec—he gave it to Mr. Lort; but I am not certain he ever published it. You was the first that notified to me the fifth volume of the Archæologia—I am not much

more edified than usual; but there are three pretty prints of Reginal Seals. Mr. Pegge's tedious dissertation, which he calls a brief one, about the foolish legend of St. George, is despicable: all his arguments are equally good for proving the existence of the dragon. What diversion might laughers make of the society! Dolly Pentraeth, the old woman of Mousehole, and Mr. Penneck's nurse, p. 81, would have furnished Foote with two personages for a farce. The same grave dissertation on patriarchal customs, seems to have as much to do with British antiquities, as the Lapland witches that sell wind — and pray what business has the society with Roman inscriptions in Dalmatia! I am most pleased with the account of Nonsuch, imperfect as it is — it appears to have been but a villa, and not considerable for a royal one. You see lilacs were then a novelty — well, I am glad they publish away. The vanity of figuring in these repositories will make many persons contribute their MSS. and every now and then something valuable will come to light, which its own intrinsic merit might not have saved.

I know nothing more of Houghton. I should certainly be glad to have the priced catalogue; and if you will lend me yours, my printer shall transcribe it — but I am in no hurry. I conceive faint hopes, as the sale is not concluded — however, I take care not to flatter myself.

I think I told you I had purchased, at Mr. Ives's sale, a handsome coat in painted glass, of Hobart impaling Boleyn — but I can find no such match in my pedigree — yet I have heard that Blickling belonged to Ann Boleyn's father. Pray reconcile all this to me.

Lord de Ferrers is to dine here on Saturday; and I have got to treat him with an account of ancient painting, formerly in the hall of Tamworth-castle; they are mentioned in Warton's Observations on the Fairy Queen, vol. i. p. 43.

Do not put yourself to pain to answer this — only be assured I shall be happy to know when you are able to write with ease. You must leave your cloister, if your transcribing leaves you.

TO THE REV. MR. LORT.

Strawberry-hill, June 4, 1779.

I AM sorry, dear sir, you could not let me have the pleasure of your company; but, I own, you have partly, not entirely, made me amends by the sight of your curious MS. which I return you, with your other book of inaugurations.

The sight of the MS. was particularly welcome to me, because the long visit of Henry VI. and his uncle Gloucester, to St. Edmund's Bury, accounts for those rare altar tablets that I bought at

Mr. Ives's sale, on which are incontestably the portraits of duke Humphrey, cardinal Beaufort, and the same archbishop that is in my marriage of Henry VI. I know the house of Lancaster were patrons of St. Edmund's Bury; but so long a visit is demonstration.

The fourth person on my pannels is unknown. Over his head is a coat of arms. It may be that of W. Curteys the abbot, or the alderman, as he is in scarlet. His figure and the duke's are far superior to the other two, and worthy of a good Italian master. The cardinal and the archbishop are in the dry hard manner of the age. I wish you would call and look at them; they are at Mr. Bonus's in Oxford-road; the two prelates are much damaged. I peremptorily enjoined Bonus to repair only, and not repaint them; and thus by putting him out of his way, I have put him so much out of humour too, that he has kept them these two years, and not finished them yet. I design them for the four void spaces in my chapel, on the sides of the shrine. The duke of Gloucester's face is so like, though younger, that it proves I guessed right at his figure in my marriage. The tables came out of the abbey of Bury, were procured by old Peter Le Neve, norroy, and came by his widow's marriage to Tom Martin, at whose sale Mr. Ives bought them. We have very few princely portraits so ancient, so authentic, and none so well painted as the duke and fourth

person. These were the insides of the doors which I had split into two, and value them extremely. This account I think will be more satisfactory to you than notes.

Pray tell me how you like the pictures when you have examined them. I shall search in Edmondson's new Vocabulary of Arms for the coat, which contains three bull's heads on six pieces; but the colours are either white and black, or the latter is become so by time. I hope you are not going out of town yet; I shall probably be there some day in next week.

I see advertized a book something in the way of your inaugurations, called *Le Costume;* do you know any thing of it? Can you tell me who is the author of the Second Anticipation on the Exhibition? Is not it Barry the painter?

Your much obliged.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Saturday, June 5, 1779.

I write to you more seldom than I am disposed to do, from having nothing positive to tell you, and from being unwilling to say and unsay every minute something that is reported positively. The confident assertions of the victory over D'Estaing are totally vanished — and they who invented

them, now declaim as bitterly against Byron, as if he had deceived them—and as they did against Keppel. This day se'nnight there was a great alarm about Ireland—which was far from being all invention, though not an absolute insurrection, as was said. The case, I believe, was this: The court, in order to break the volunteer army established by the Irish themselves, endeavoured to persuade a body in lady Blayney's county of Monaghan to enlist in the militia—which they took indignantly. They said, they had great regard for lady Blayney and lord Clermont; but to act under them, would be acting under the king, and that was by no means their intention. There have since been motions for inquiries what steps the ministers have taken to satisfy the Irish—and these they have imprudently rejected—which will not tend to pacification. The ministers have been pushed too on the article of Spain, and could not deny that all negotiation is at an end—though they will not own farther. However, the Spanish ambassador is much out of humour. From Paris they write confidently of the approaching declaration; and lord Sandwich, I hear, has said in a very mixed company, that it was folly not to expect it. There is another million asked, and given on a vote of credit; and lord North has boasted of such mines for next year, that one would think he believed next year would never come.

The inquiry[1] goes on, and lord Harrington did himself and Burgoyne honour. Barré and governor Johnstone have had warm words, and Burke has been as frantic for the Roman Catholics as lord George Gordon against them. The parliament, it is said, is to rise on the 21st.

You will not collect from all this that our prospect clears up. I fear there is not more discretion in the treatment of Ireland than of America. The court seems to be infatuated, and to think that nothing is of any consequence but a majority in parliament — though they have totally lost all power but that of provoking. Fortunate it had been for the king and kingdom, had the court had no majority for these six years! America had still been ours! — and all the lives and all the millions we have squandered! A majority that has lost thirteen provinces by bullying and vapouring, and the most childish menaces, will be a brave countermatch for France and Spain, and a rebellion in Ireland! In short, it is plain that there is nothing a majority in parliament can do, but outvote a minority; and yet by their own accounts one would think they could not do even that. I saw a paper t'other day that began with this Iriscism, "As the minority have lost us thirteen provinces," &c. I

[1] Into the conduct of the American war.

know nothing the minority have done, or been suffered to do, but restore the Roman Catholic religion — and that too was by the desire of the court.

This is however the present style. They announced with infinite applause a new production of Tickell:—it has appeared, and is a most paltry performance. It is called the Cassette verte of M. de Sartine, and pretends to be his correspondence with the opposition. Nay, they are so pitifully mean as to laugh at doctor Franklin, who has such thorough reason to sit and laugh at them. What triumph it must be to him to see a miserable pamphlet all the revenge they can take! There is another, still duller, called Opposition Mornings, in which you are lugged in. In truth, it is a compliment to any man to except him out of the number of those that have contributed to the shocking disgraces inflicted on this undone country! When lord Chatham was minister, he never replied to abuse but by a victory.

I know no private news: I have been here ever since Tuesday, enjoying my tranquillity, as much as an honest man can do who sees his country ruined. It is just such a period as makes philosophy wisdom. There are great moments when every man is called on to exert himself — but when folly, infatuation, delusion, incapacity, and profligacy fling a nation away, and it concurs itself, and applauds its destroyers, a man who has

lent no hand to the mischief, and can neither prevent nor remedy the mass of evils, is fully justified in sitting aloof and beholding the tempest rage, with silent scorn and indignant compassion. Nay, I have, I own, some comfortable reflections. I rejoice that there is still a great continent of Englishmen who will remain free and independent, and who laugh at the impotent majorities of a prostitute parliament. I care not whether general Burgoyne and governor Johnstone cross over and figure in, and support or oppose; nor whether Mr. Burke, or the superior of the Jesuits, is high commissioner to the kirk of Scotland. My ideas are such as I have always had, and are too plain and simple to comprehend modern confusions; and, therefore, they suit with those of few men. What will be the issue of this chaos, I know not, and, probably, shall not see. I do see with satisfaction, *that what was meditated* has failed by the grossest folly; and when one has escaped the worst, lesser evils must be endured with patience.

After this dull effusion, I will divert you with a story that made me laugh this morning till I cried. You know my Swiss David, and his incomprehensible pronunciation. He came to me, and said, "Auh! dar is Meses * * * * wants some of your large flags to put in her great O." With much ado I found out that Mrs. * * * * had sent for leave to take up some flags out of my meadow for her grotto.

' I hope in a few days to see lady Ailesbury and miss J * * * * here; I have writ to propose it.—What are your intentions? Do you stay till you have made your island impregnable? I doubt it will be our only one that will be so.

To the COUNTESS of AILESBURY.

Strawberry-hill, Tuesday night, June 8, 1779.

You frightened me for a minute, my dear madam; but every letter since has given me pleasure, by telling me how rapidly you recovered, and how perfectly well you are again. Pray, however, do not give me any more such joys. I shall be quite content with your remaining immortal, without the foil of any alarm. You gave all your friends a panic, and may trust their attachment without renewing it. I received as many inquiries the next day as if an archbishop was in danger, and all the bench hoped he was going to heaven.

Mr. Conway wonders I do not talk of Voltaire's Memoirs.—Lord bless me! I saw it two months ago; the Lucans brought it from Paris and lent it to me: nay, and I have seen most of it before; and I believe this an imperfect copy, for it ends no how at all. Besides, it was quite out of my head. Lord Melcombe's Diary put that and every thing else out of my mind. I wonder much more

at Mr. Conway's not talking of this! It gossips about the living as familiarly as a modern newspaper. I long to hear what * * * * says about it. I wish the newspapers were as accurate! They have been circumstantial about *lady Walsingham's* birth-day clothes, which to be sure one is glad to know, only unluckily there is no such person.[1] However, I dare to say that her dress was very becoming, and that she looked charmingly.

The month of June, according to custom immemorial, is as cold as Christmas. I had a fire last night, and all my rosebuds, I believe, would have been very glad to sit by it. I have other grievances to boot; but as they are annuals too, *videlicet*,—people to see my house,—I will not torment your ladyship with them: yet I know nothing else. None of my neighbours are come into the country yet: one would think all the dowagers were elected into the new parliament. Adieu, my dear madam!

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[1] The title of Walsingham was not revived in the family of de Grey till the year 1780.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 16, 1779.

Your countess was here last Thursday, and received a letter from you, that told us how slowly you receive ours. When you will receive this I cannot guess; but it dates a new æra, which you with reason did not care to look at as possible. In a word, behold a Spanish war! I must detail a little to increase your wonder. I heard here the day before yesterday that it was likely; and that night received a letter from Paris, telling me (it was of the 6th) that monsieur de Beauveau was going, they knew not whither, at the head of 25,000 men, with three lieutenant-generals and six or eight marechaux de camp under him. Yesterday I went to town, and T. W. happened to call on me.—He, who used to be informed early, did not believe a word either of a Spanish war or a French expedition. I saw some other persons in the evening as ignorant. At night I went to sup at Richmond-house. The duke said the Brest fleet was certainly sailed, and had got the start of ours by twelve days; that monsieur de Beauveau was on board with a large sum of money, and with white and *red* cockades; and that there would certainly be a Spanish war. He added, that the opposition were then pressing in the house of commons to have the parliament continue sitting,

and urging to know if we were not at the eve of a Spanish war; but the ministers persisted in the prorogation for to-morrow or Friday, and would not answer on Spain.

I said I would make you wonder —— But no— Why should the parliament continue to sit? Are not the ministers and the parliament the same thing? And how has either house shown that it has any talent for war?

The duke of Richmond does not guess whither the Brest fleet is gone.—He thinks, if to Ireland, we should have known it by this time. He has heard that the prince of Beauveau has said he was going on an expedition that would be glorious in the eyes of posterity.—I asked, if that might not mean Gibraltar? The duke doubts, but hopes it, as he thinks it no wise measure on their side; yet he was very melancholy, as you will be, on this heavy accession to our distresses.

Well! here we are, *aris et focis* and all at stake! What can we be meaning? Unable to conquer America before she was assisted — scarce able to keep France at bay—are we a match for both, and Spain too? — What can be our view? nay, what can be our expectation? I sometimes think we reckon it will be more creditable to be forced by France and Spain to give up America, than to have the merit with the latter of doing it with grace.—But, as Cato says,

I am weary of conjectures—This must end them;

that is, the sword:—and never, I believe, did a country plunge itself into such difficulties step by step, and for six years together, without once recollecting that each foreign war rendered the object of the civil war more unattainable; and that in both the foreign wars we have not an object in prospect. Unable to recruit our remnant of an army in America, are we to make conquests on France and Spain? They may choose their attacks: we can scarce choose what we will defend.

Ireland, they say, is more temperate than was expected. That is some consolation—yet many fear the Irish will be tempted to unite with America, which would throw all that trade into their convenient harbours: and I own I have apprehensions that the parliament's rising without taking a step in their favour, may offend them. Surely at least we have courageous ministers. I thought my father a stout man:—he had not a tithe of their spirit.

The town has wound up the season perfectly in character by a fête at the Pantheon by subscription. Le Texier managed it; but it turned out sadly. The company was first shut into the galleries to look down on the supper, then let to descend to it. Afterwards they were led into the subterraneous apartment, which was laid with mould, and planted with trees, and crammed with nosegays: but the fresh earth, and the dead leaves, and the effluvia of breaths made such a stench and moisture, that

they were suffocated; and when they remounted, the legs and wings of chickens and remnants of ham (for the supper was not removed) poisoned them more. A druid in an arbour distributed verses to the ladies; then the Baccelli and the dancers of the opera danced; and then danced the company; and then it being morning, and the candles burnt out, the windows were opened; and then the stewed danced assembly were such shocking figures, that they fled like ghosts as they looked. ——I suppose there will be no more balls unless the French land, and then we shall show we do not mind it.

Thus I have told you all I know. You will ponder over these things in your little distant island, when we have forgotten them. There is another person, one doctor Franklin, who I fancy, is not sorry that we divert ourselves so well.

To the Hon. GEORGE HARDINGE.[1]

Strawberry-hill, July 4, 1779.

I have now received the drawings of Grignan, and know not how to express my satisfaction and

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[1] His majesty's justice for the counties of Glamorgan, Brecknoc, and Radnor.

gratitude but by a silly witticism that is like the studied quaintness of the last age. In short, they are so much more beautiful than I expected, that I am *not* surprised at *your* having surprised me by exceeding even what I expected from your well-known kindness to me; they are charmingly executed, and with great taste. I own too that Grignan is grander, and in a much finer situation, than I had imagined, as I concluded that the witchery of Madame de Sévigné's ideas and style had spread the same leaf-gold over *places* with which she gilded her *friends.* All that has appeared of *them* since the publication of her letters has lowered them. A single letter of her daughter, that to Paulina, with a description of the duchess of Bourbon's toilette, is worthy of the mother. Paulina's own letters contain not a little worth reading; one just divines that she might have written well if she had had any thing to write about (which, however, would not have signified to her grandmother). Coulanges was a silly good-humoured glutton, that flattered a rich widow for her dinners. His wife was sensible, but dry, and rather peevish at growing old. Unluckily nothing more has come to light of madame de Sévigné's son, whose short letters in the collection I am almost *profane* enough to prefer to his mother's; and which makes me astonished that she did not love his wit, so unaffected, and so congenial to her own, in preference to the eccentric and so-

phisticated reveries of her sublime and ill-humoured daughter. Grignan alone maintains its dignity, and shall be consecrated here among other monuments of that bewitching period, and amongst which one loves to lose oneself, and drink oblivion of an æra so very unlike; for the awkward bigots to despotism of our time have not madame de Sévigné's address, nor can paint an Indian idol with an hundred hands as graceful as the Apollo of the Belvidere. When will you come and accept my thanks? will Wednesday next suit you? But do you know that I must ask you not to leave your gown behind you, which indeed I never knew you put on willingly, but to come in it. I shall want your protection at Westminster Hall.

Yours most cordially.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBURY.

Saturday night, July 10, 1779.

I COULD not thank your ladyship before the post went out to-day, as I was getting into my chaise to go and dine at Carshalton with my cousin T. Walpole when I received your kind inquiry about my eye. It is quite well again, and I hope the next attack of the gout will be any where rather than in that quarter.

I did not expect Mr. Conway would think of returning just now. As you have lost both Mrs. Damer and lady William Campbell, I do not see why your ladyship should not go to Goodwood.

The Baroness's increasing peevishness does not surprise me. When people will not weed their own minds, they are apt to be overrun with nettles. She knows nothing of politics, and no wonder talks nonsense about them. It is silly to wish three nations had but one neck; but it is ten times more absurd to act as if it was so, which the government has done;—aye, and forgetting, too, that it has not a scymitar large enough to sever that neck, which they have in effect made *one*. It is past the time, madame, of making conjectures. How can one guess whither France and Spain will direct a blow that is in their option? I am rather inclined to think that they will have patience to ruin us in detail. Hitherto France and America have carried their points by that manœuvre. Should there be an engagement at sea, and the French and Spanish fleets, by their great superiority, should have the advantage, one knows not what might happen. Yet, though there are such large preparations making on the French coast, I do not much expect a serious invasion, as they are sure they can do us more damage by a variety of other attacks, where we can make little resistance. Gibraltar and Jamaica can but be the immediate objects of Spain. Ireland is much worse guarded than this

island:—nay, we must be undone by our expense, should the summer pass without any attempt. My cousin thinks they will try to destroy Portsmouth and Plymouth—but I have seen nothing in the present French ministry that looks like bold enterprise. We are much more adventurous, that set every thing to the hazard: but there are such numbers of *baronesses* that both talk and act with passion, that one would think the nation had lost its senses. Every thing has miscarried that has been undertaken, and the worse we succeed, the more is risked;—yet the nation is not angry! How can one conjecture during such a delirium? I sometimes almost think I must be in the wrong to be of so contrary an opinion to most men—yet, when every misfortune that has happened had been foretold by a few, why should I not think I have been in the right? Has not almost every single event that has been announced as prosperous proved a gross falsehood, and often a silly one? Are we not at this moment assured that Washington cannot possibly amass an army of above 8000 men! and yet Clinton, with 20,000 men, and with the hearts, as we are told, too, of three parts of the colonies, dares not show his teeth without the walls of New York!—Can I be in the wrong in not believing what is so contradictory to my senses? We could not conquer America when it stood alone; then France supported it, and we did not mend the matter. To make it still easier, we have driven

Spain into the alliance. Is this wisdom? Would it be presumption, even if one were single, to think that we must have the worst in such a contest? Shall I be like the mob, and expect to conquer France and Spain, and then thunder upon America?—Nay, but the higher mob do not expect such success. They would not be so angry at the house of Bourbon, if not morally certain that those kings destroy all our passionate desire and expectation of conquering America. We bullied, and threatened, and begged, and nothing would do. Yet independence was still the word. Now we rail at the two monarchs—and when they have banged us, we shall sue to them as humbly as we did to the Congress. All this my senses, such as they are, tell me has been and will be the case. What is worse, all Europe is of the same opinion; and though forty thousand *baronesses* may be ever so angry, I venture to prophesy that we shall make but a very foolish figure whenever we are so lucky as to obtain a peace; and posterity, that may have prejudices of its own, will still take the liberty to pronounce that its ancestors were a woful set of politicians from the year 1774 to —— I wish I knew when.

If I might advise, I would recommend Mr. B * * * to command the fleet in the room of sir Charles Hardy. The fortune of the B * * * s is powerful enough to baffle calculation. Good night, madam!

P. S. I have not written to Mr. Conway since this day sevennight, not having a teaspoonful of news to send him. I will beg your ladyship to tell him so.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 12, 1779.

I AM concerned, dear sir, that you gave yourself the trouble of transcribing the catalogue and prices, which I received last night, and for which I am exceedingly obliged to you. Partial as I am to the pictures at Houghton, I confess I think them much overvalued. My father's whole collection, of which alone he had preserved the prices, cost but 40,000*l.*; and after his death there were three sales of pictures, among which were all the whole lengths of Vandyke but three, which had been sent to Houghton, but not fitting any of the spaces left, came back to town. Few of the rest sold were very fine, but no doubt sir Robert had paid as dear for many of them; as purchasers are not perfect connoisseurs at first.

Many of the valuations are not only exorbitant, but injudicious. They who made the estimate seem to have considered the rarity of the hands more than the excellence. Three, the magic offering, by Carlo Maratti, as it is called, and two, supposed Paul Veronese, are very indifferent

copies, and yet all are roundly valued, and the first ridiculously. I do not doubt of another picture in the collection but the last supper, by Raphael, and yet this is set down at 500*l.* I miss three pictures, at least they are not set down, the sir Thomas Wharton, and Laud and Gibbons. The first is most capital; yes, I recollect I have had some doubts on the Laud, though the University of Oxford once offered 400*l.* for it — and if queen Henrietta is by Vandyke, it is a very indifferent one. The affixing a higher value to the Pietro Cortona than to the octagon Guido is most absurd — I have often gazed on the latter, and preferred it even to the doctor's. In short, the appraisers were determined to see what the Czarina *could* give, rather than what the pictures were really worth — I am glad she seems to think so, for I hear no more of the sale — it is not very wise in me, still to concern myself at my age, about what I have so little interest in — it is still less wise to be anxious on trifles, when one's country is sinking. I do not know which is most mad, my nephew or our ministers — both the one and the other increase my veneration for the founder of Houghton!

I will not rob you of the prints you mention, dear sir; one of them at least I know Mr. Pennant gave me. I do not admire him for his punctiliousness with you. Pray tell me the name of your glass-painter; I do not think I shall want him,

but it is not impossible. Mr. Essex agreed with me — that Jarvis's windows for Oxford after sir Joshua Reynolds, will not succeed. Most of his colours are opake, and their great beauty depending on a spot of light for sun or moon, is an imposition. When his paintings are exhibited at Charing-cross, all the rest of the room is darkened to relieve them. That cannot be done at New College; or if done, the chapel would be too dark. If there are other lights, the effect will be lost.

This sultry weather will, I hope, quite restore you; people need not go to Lisbon and Naples, if we continue to have such summers.

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 12, 1779.

I write from decency, dear sir, not from having any thing particular to say, but to thank you for your offer of letting me see the arms of painted glass, which, however, I will decline, lest it should be broken; and as at present I have no occasion to employ the painter. If I build my offices perhaps I may have; but I have dropped that thought for this year. The disastrous times do not inspire expense. Our alarms, I conclude, do not ruffle your hermitage. We are returning to our state

of islandhood, and shall have little, I believe, to boast but of what we have been.

I see a History of Alien Priories announced; do you know any thing of it, or of the author?

I am,

Ever yours most sincerely.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBURY.

Strawberry-hill, Friday night, 1779.

I AM not at all surprised, my dear madam, at the intrepidity of Mrs. Damer;[1] she always was the heroic daughter of a hero. Her sense and coolness never forsake her. I, who am not so firm, shuddered at your ladyship's account. Now that she has stood fire for four hours, I hope she will give as clear proofs of her understanding, of which I have as high opinion as of her courage, and not return in any danger.

I am to dine at Ditton to-morrow, and will certainly talk on the subject you recommend—yet I am far, till I have heard more, from thinking with your ladyship, that more troops and artillery at Jersey would be desirable. Any considerable quantity of either, especially of the former, cannot

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[1] The packet in which she was crossing from Dover to Ostend was taken by a French frigate after a running fight of several hours.

be spared at this moment, when so big a cloud hangs over this island, nor would any number avail if the French should be masters at sea. A large garrison would but tempt the French thither, were it but to distress this country; and, what is worse, would encourage Mr. Conway to make an impracticable defence. If he is to remain in a situation so unworthy of him, I confess I had rather he was totally incapable of making any defence. I love him enough not to murmur at his exposing himself where his country and his honour demand him — but I would not have him measure himself in a place untenable against very superior force. My present comfort is, as to him, that France at this moment has a far vaster object. I have good reason to believe the government knows that a great army is ready to embark at St. Maloes, but will not stir till after a sea-fight, which we do not know but may be engaged at this moment. Our fleet is allowed to be the finest ever set forth by this country — but it is inferior in number by seventeen ships to the united squadron of the Bourbons. France, if successful, means to pour in a vast many thousands on us, and has threatened to burn the capital itself. Jersey, my dear madam, does not enter into a calculation of such magnitude. The moment is singularly awful — yet the vaunts of enemies are rarely executed successfully and ably. Have we trampled America under our foot?

You have too good sense, madam, to be imposed upon by my arguments, if they are insubstantial. You do know that I have had my terrors for Mr. Conway; but at present they are out of the question, from the insignificance of his island. Do not listen to rumours, nor believe a single one till it has been canvassed over and over. Fear, folly, fifty motives, will coin new reports every hour at such a conjuncture. When one is totally void of credit and power, patience is the only wisdom. I have seen dangers still more imminent. They were dispersed. Nothing happens in proportion to what is meditated. Fortune, whatever fortune is, is more constant than is the common notion. I do not give this as one of my solid arguments, but I have always encouraged myself in being superstitious on the favourable side. I never, like most superstitious people, believe auguries against my wishes. We have been fortunate in the escape of Mrs. Damer, and in the defeat at Jersey even before Mr. Conway arrived; and thence I depend on the same future prosperity. From the authority of persons who do not reason on such airy hopes, I am seriously persuaded, that if the fleets engage, the enemy will not gain advantage without deep-felt loss, enough probably to dismay their invasion. Coolness may succeed, and then negotiation.—Surely, if we can weather the summer, we shall, obstinate as we are against conviction, be compelled by the want of money to relinquish

our ridiculous pretensions, now proved to be utterly impracticable; for, with an inferior navy at home, can we assert sovereignty over America? It is a contradiction in terms and in fact. It may be hard of digestion to relinquish it, but it is impossible to pursue it. Adieu, my dear madam! I have not left room for a line more.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 13, 1779.

I am writing to you at random; not knowing whether or when this letter will go: but your brother told me last night that an officer, whose name I have forgot, was arrived from Jersey, and would return to you soon. I am sensible how very seldom I have written to you — but you have been few moments out of my thoughts. What *they* have been, you who know me so minutely may well guess, and why they do not pass my lips. Sense, experience, circumstances, can teach one to command one's self outwardly, but do not divest a most friendly heart of its feelings. I believe the state of my mind has contributed to bring on a very weak and decaying body my present disorders. I have not been well the whole summer; but for these three weeks much otherwise. It has at last ended in the gout, which, to all appearance will be a short fit.

On public affairs I cannot speak. Every thing is so exaggerated on all sides, that what grains of truth remain in the sieve would appear cold and insipid; and the great manœuvres you learn as soon as I. In the naval battle between Byron and d'Estaing, our captains were worthy of any age in our story.

You may imagine how happy I am at Mrs. Damer's return, and at her not being at Naples, as she was likely to have been, at the dreadful explosion of Vesuvius. Surely it will have glutted sir William's rage for volcanos! How poor lady Hamilton's nerves stood it I do not conceive.—Oh, mankind! mankind!—Are there not calamities enough in store for us, but must destruction be our amusement and pursuit?

I send this to Ditton,[1] where it may wait some days; but I would not suffer a sure opportunity to slip without a line. You are more obliged to me for all I do not say, than for whatever eloquence itself could pen.

P. S. I unseal my letter to add, that undoubtedly you will come to the meeting of parliament, which will be in October. Nothing can or ever did make me advise you to take a step unworthy of yourself.—But surely you have higher and more sacred duties than the government of a mole-hill!

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[1] Where lord Hertford had then a villa.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 16, 1779.

You ought not to accuse yourself only, when I have been as silent as you. Surely we have been friends too long to admit ceremony as a go-between. I have thought of writing to you several times, but found I had nothing worth telling you. I am rejoiced to hear your health has been better: mine has been worse the whole summer and autumn than ever it was without any positive distemper, and thence I conclude it is a failure in my constitution — of which, being a thing of course, we will say no more — nobody but a physician is bound to hear what he cannot cure—and if we will pay for what we cannot expect, it is our own fault.

I have seen doctor Lort, who seems pleased with becoming a limb of Canterbury. I heartily wish the mitre may not devolve before it has beamed substantially on him. In the mean time he will be delighted with ransacking the library at Lambeth; and, to do him justice, his ardour is literary, not interested.

I am much obliged to you, dear sir, for taking the trouble of transcribing Mr. Tyson's Journal, which is entertaining. But I am so ignorant as not to know where Hatfield Priory is. The three heads I remember on the gate at Whitehall; there

were five more. The whole demolished structure was transported to the great park at Windsor by the late duke of Cumberland, who intended to re-edify it, but never did; and now I suppose

Its ruins ruined, as its place no more.

I did not know what was become of the heads, and am glad any are preserved. I should doubt their being the works of Torregiano. Pray who is Mr. Nichols, who has published the Alien Priories; there are half a dozen or more pretty views of French cathedrals. I cannot say that I found any thing else in the book that amused me — but as you deal more in ancient lore than I do, perhaps you might be better pleased.

I am told there is a new History of Gloucestershire, very large, but ill executed, by one Reedhall — still I have sent for it, for Gloucestershire is a very historic country.

It was a wrong scent on which I employed you. The arms I have impaled were certainly not Boleyn's. You lament removal of friends — alas! dear sir, when one lives to our age, one feels that in a higher degree than from their change of place! but one must not dilate those common moralities. You see by my date I have changed place myself. I am got into an excellent, comfortable, cheerful house; and as, from necessity and inclination, I live much more at home

than I used to do, it is very agreeable to be so pleasantly lodged, and to be in a warm inn as one passes through the last vale. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 27, 1779.

I HAVE two good reasons against writing, nothing to say, and a lame muffled hand; and therefore I choose to write to you, for it shows remembrance. For these six weeks almost I have been a prisoner with the gout, but begin to creep about my room. How have you borne the late deluge and the present frost? How do you like an earl bishop? Had not we one before in ancient days? I have not a a book in town, but was not there an Anthony Beck, or a Hubert de Burgh, that was bishop of Durham and earl of Kent, or have I confounded them?

Have you seen Rudder's new History of Gloucestershire? His addition to sir Robert Atkyns, make it the most sensible history of a county that we have had yet, for his descriptions of the scite, soil, products, and prospects of each parish are extremely good and picturesque, and he treats fanciful prejudices, and Saxon etymologies, when unfounded, and traditions, with due contempt.

I will not spin this note any further, but shall be glad of a line to tell me you are well. I have not seen Mr. Lort since he roosted under the metropolitan wings of his grace of Lambeth.

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 5, 1780.

When you said that you feared that your particular account of your very providential escape would deter me from writing to you again, I am sure, dear sir, that you spoke only from modesty, and not from thinking me capable of being so criminally indifferent to any thing, much less under such danger as you have run, that regards so old a friend, and one to whom I owe so many obligations. I am but too apt to write letters on trifling or no occasions; and should certainly have told you the interest I take in your accident, and how happy I am that it had no consequences of any sort. It is hard that temperance itself, which you are, should be punished for a good-natured transgression of your own rules, and where the excess was only staying out beyond your usual hour. I am heartily glad you did not jump out of your chaise; it has often been a much worse precaution than any consequences from risking to remain in

it; as you are lame too, might have been very fatal. Thank God! all ended so well. Mr. Masters seems to have been more frightened, with not greater reason. What an absurd man to be impatient to notify a disagreeable event to you, and in so boisterous a manner, and which he could not know was true, since it was not!

I shall take extremely kind your sending me your picture in glass. I have carefully preserved the slight outline of yourself in a gown and night cap, which you once was so good as to give me, because there was some likeness to your features, though it is too old even now. For a portrait of me in return, you might have it by sending the painter to the anatomical school, and bidding him draw the first skeleton he sees. I should expect any limner would laugh in my face if I offered it to him to be copied.

I thought I had confounded the ancient count bishops, as I had, and you have set me right. The new temporal ecclesiastical peer's estate is more than twelve thousand a year, though I can scarce believe it is eighteen, as the last lord said.

The picture found near the altar in Westminster Abbey, about three years ago, was of king Sebert; I saw it, and it was well preserved, with some others worse — but they have foolishly buried it again behind their new altar-piece; and so they have a very fine tomb of Ann of Cleve, close to the altar, which they did not know till I told them

whose it was, though her arms are upon it, and though there is an exact plate of it in Sandford. They might at least have cut out the portraits and removed the tomb to a conspicuous situation —but though this age is grown so antiquarian, it has not gained a grain more of sense in that walk —witness as you instance in Mr. Grose's Legends, and in the dean and chapter reburying the crown, robes, and sceptre of Edward I.—there would surely have been as much piety in preserving them in their treasury, as in consigning them again to decay. I did not know that the salvation of robes and crowns depended on receiving Christian burial. At the same time the chapter transgress that prince's will, like all their antecessors, for he ordered his tomb to be opened every year or two years, and receive a new sere cloth or pall —but they boast now of having enclosed him so substantially, that his ashes cannot be violated again.

It was the present bishop Dean who showed me the pictures and Ann's tomb, and consulted me on the new altar-piece.—I advised him to have a light octangular canopy, like the cross at Chichester, placed over the table or altar itself, which would have given dignity to it, especially if elevated by a flight of steps; and from the side arches of the octagon, I would have had a semicircle of open arches that should have advanced quite to the seats of the prebends, which would

have discovered the pictures; and through the octagon itself you would have perceived the shrine of Edward the Confessor, which is much higher than the level of the choir—but men who ask advice seldom follow it, if you do not happen to light on the same ideas with themselves.

Yours most sincerely.

P. S. The Houghton pictures are not lost—but to Houghton and England!

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 5, 1780.

I have been turning over the new second volume of the Biographia, and find the additions very poor and lean performances.

The lives entirely new are partial and flattering, being contributions of the friends of those whose lives are recorded. This publication made at a time when I have lived to see several of my contemporaries deposited in this national temple of fame has made me smile, and reflect that many preceding authors, who have been installed there with much respect, may have been as trifling personages as those we have known and now behold consecrated to memory. Three or four have struck me particularly, as Dr. Birch, who was a

worthy, good-natured soul, full of industry and activity, and running about like a young setting dog in quest of any thing, new or old, and with no parts, taste, or judgment. Then there is Dr. Blackwell, the most impertinent literary coxcomb upon earth—but the editor has been so just as to insert a very merited satire on his Court of Augustus.

The third is Dr. Brown, that mountebank, who for a little time made as much noise by his estimate, as ever quack did by a nostrum. I do not know if I ever told you how much I was struck the only time I ever saw him. You know one object, and the anathemas of his estimate was the Italian Opera—yet did I find him one evening, in Passion week, accompanying some of the Italian singers, at a concert at lady Carlisle's. A clergyman, no doubt, is not obliged to be on his knees the whole week before Easter, and music and a concert are harmless amusements; but when Cato or Calvin are out of character, reformation becomes ridiculous—but poor Dr. Brown was mad, and therefore might be in earnest, whether he played the fool or the reformer.

You recollect, perhaps, the threat of Dr. Kippis to me, which is to be executed on my father, for my calling the first edition of the Biographia the Vindicatio Britannica—but observe how truth emerges at last! In his new volume he confesses that the article of lord Arlington, which I had

specified as one of the most censurable, is the one most deserving that censure, and that the character of lord Arlington is *palliated beyond all truth and reason*—words stronger than mine—yet mine deserved to draw vengeance on my father! so a Presbyterian divine inverts divine judgment, and visits the sins of the children on the parents!

Cardinal Beaton's character, softened in the first edition, gentle Dr. Kippis pronounces *extremely detestable*—yet was I to blame for hinting such defects in that work!—and yet my words are quoted to show that lord Orrery's poetry was ridiculously bad. In like manner, Mr. Cumberland, who assumes the whole honour of publishing his grandfather's Lucan, and does not deign to mention its being published at Strawberry-hill, (though by the way I believe it will be oftener purchased for having been printed there, than for wearing Mr. Cumberland's name to the dedication,) and yet he quotes me for having praised his ancestor in one of my publications. These little instances of pride and spleen divert me—and then make me reflect sadly on human weaknesses. I am very apt myself to like what flatters my opinions or passions, and to reject scornfully what thwarts them, even in the same persons. The more one lives, the more one discovers one's uglinesses in the features of others!

Adieu! dear sir—I hope you do not suffer by this severe season. Yours ever.

P. S. I remember two other instances, where my impartiality, or at least my sincerity, have exposed me to double censure.

You perhaps condemned my severity on Charles I. yet the late Mr. Hollis wrote against me in the newspapers, for condemning the republicans for their destruction of ancient monuments. Some blamed me for undervaluing the Flemish and Dutch pictures in my preface to the Aedes Walpolianæ.

Barry the painter, because I laughed at his extravagancies, says, in his rejection of that school, "But I leave them to be admired by the Hon. H * * * W * * *, and such judges."—Would not one think I had been their champion!

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 27, 1780.

UNAPT as you are to inquire after news, dear sir, you wish to have admiral Rodney's victory confirmed. I can now assure you, that he has had a considerable advantage, and took at least four Spanish men-of-war, and an admiral, who they say is since dead of his wounds.—We must be glad of these deplorable successes—but I heartily wish we had no longer occasion to hope for the destruction of any of our species—but, alas! it

looks as if devastation would still open new fields of blood! The prospect darkens even at home — but, however you and I may differ in our political principles, it would be happy if every body would pursue theirs with as little rancour. How seldom does it happen in political contests, that any side can count any thing but its wounds! your habitudes seclude you from meddling in our divisions; so do my age and my illnesses me. Sixty-two is not a season for bustling among young partizans. Indeed, if the times grow perfectly serious, I shall not wish to reach sixty-three. Even a superannuated spectator is then a miserable being; for though insensibility is one of the softenings of old age, neither one's feelings or enjoyments can be accompanied with tranquillity. We veterans must hide ourselves in inglorious insecurity, and lament what we cannot prevent; nor shall be listened to, till misfortunes have brought the actors to their senses; and then it will be too late, or they will calm themselves faster than we could preach — but I hope, the experience of the last century will have some operation and check our animosities. Surely too, we shall recollect the ruin a civil war would bring on, when accompanied by such collaterals as French and Spanish wars. Providence alone can steer us amidst all these rocks. I shall watch the interposition of its ægis with anxiety and humility. It saved us this last summer, and nothing else I am sure did — but

often the mutual follies of enemies are the instruments of heaven. — If it pleases not to inspire wisdom, I shall be content if it extricates us by the reciprocal blunders and oversights of all parties—of which, at least, we ought never to despair. It is almost my systematic belief, that as cunning and penetration are seldom exerted for good ends, it is the absurdity of mankind that often acts as a succedaneum, and carries on and maintains the equilibrium that Heaven designed should subsist. Adieu, dear sir. Shall we live to lay down our heads in peace?

Yours ever.

28th.—A second volume of sir George Rodney's exploits is arrived to-day. I do not know the authentic circumstances, for I have not been abroad yet, but they say he has taken four more Spanish ships of the line and five frigates; of the former, one of ninety guns. Spain was sick of the war before—how fortunate if she would renouce it!

I have just got a new history of Leicester, in six small volumes. It seems to be superficial—but the author is young and talks modestly, which, if it will not serve instead of merit, makes one at least hope he will improve, and not grow insolent on age and more knowledge. I have also received from Paris a copy of an illumination from la Cite des dames of Christina of Pisa in the French king's

library. There is her own portrait with three allegoric figures. I have learnt much more about her, and of her amour with an English peer, but I have not time to say more at present.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 6, 1780.

I have this moment received your portrait in glass, dear sir, and am impatient to thank you for it, and tell you how much I value it. It is better executed than I own I expected, and yet I am not quite satisfied with it. The drawing is a little incorrect, the eyes too small in proportion, and the mouth exaggerated. In short, it is a strong likeness of your features, but not of your countenance, which is better, and more serene. However, I am enough content to place it at Strawberry amongst all my favourite, brittle, transitory relics, which will soon vanish with their founder — and with his no great unwillingness for himself.

I take it ill, that you should think I should suspect you of asking *indirectly* for my noble authors — and much more if you would not be so free as to ask for them *directly* — a most trifling present surely — and from you who have made me a thousand! I know I have some copies in my old house in Arlington-street, I hope of both volumes, I am

sure of the second — I will soon go thither and look for them.

I have gone through the six volumes of Leicester. The author is so modest and so humble, that I am quite sorry it is so very bad a work; the arrangement detestable, the materials trifling, his reflexions humane but silly. He disposes all under reigns of Roman emperors and English kings, whether they did any thing or nothing at Leicester. I am sorry I have such predilection for the histories of particular counties and towns: there certainly does not exist a worse class of reading.

Dr. E. made me a visit last week. — He is not at all less vociferous for his disgrace. I wish I had any guinea fowls. — I can easily get you some eggs from lady Ailesbury, and will ask her for some, that you may have the pleasure of rearing your own chicks — but how can you bear their noise? they are more discordant and clamorous than peacocks. How shall I convey the eggs?

I smiled at Dr. Kippis's bestowing the victory on dean Milles, and a sprig on Mr. Masters. I regard it as I should, if the sexton of Broad-street St. Giles's were to make a lower bow to a cheesemonger of his own parish than to me. They are all three haberdashers of small wares, and welcome to each others civilities. When such men are summoned to a jury on one of their own trade, it is natural they should be partial. They do not rea-

son, but recollect how much themselves have overcharged some yards of buckram. Adieu.

Yours most cordially.

P. S. Mr. Pennicott has shown me a most curious and delightful picture. It is Rose the royal gardener, presenting the first pine-apple raised in England to Charles II. They are in a garden, with a view of a good private house, such as there are several at Sunbury and about London. It is by far the best likeness of the king I ever saw; the countenance cheerful, good-humoured, and very sensible. He is in brown, lined with orange, and many black ribands, a large flapped hat, dark wig, not tied up, nor yet bushy, a point cravat, no waistcoat, and a tasselled handkerchief hanging from a low pocket. The whole is of the smaller landscape size, and extremely well coloured, with perfect harmony. It was a legacy from London, grandson of him who was partner with Wise.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, March 13, 1780.

YOU compliment me, my good friend, on a sagacity that is surely very common. How frequently

do we see portraits that have catched the features, and missed the countenance or character—which is far more difficult to hit, nor is it unfrequent to hear that remark made.

I have confessed to you that I am fond of local histories. It is the general execution of them that I condemn, and that I call *the worst kind of reading*. I cannot comprehend but that they might be performed with taste. I did mention this winter the new edition of Atkyns's Gloucestershire, as having additional descriptions of situations that I thought had merit. I have just got another, a View of Northumberland, in two volumes quarto, with cuts; but I do not devour it fast, for the author's predilection is to Roman antiquities, which, such as are found in this island, are very indifferent, and inspire me with little curiosity. A barbarous country, so remote from the seat of empire, and occupied by a few legions that very rarely decided any great events, is not very interesting, though one's own country—Nor do I care a straw for a stone that preserves the name of a standard bearer of a cohort, or of a colonel's daughter. Then I have no patience to read the tiresome disputes of antiquaries to settle forgotten names of vanished towns, and to prove that such a village was called something else in Antoninus's Itinerary. I do not say the Gothic antiquities I like are of more importance; but at least they exist. The scite of a Roman camp, of which nothing remains but a

bank, gives me not the smallest pleasure. One knows they had square camps — has one a clearer idea from the spot, which is barely distinguishable? How often does it happen that the lumps of earth are so imperfect, that it is never clear whether they are Roman, Druidic, Danish, or Saxon fragments — the moment it is uncertain; it is plain they furnish no specific idea of art or history, and then I neither desire to see or read of them. I have been diverted too by another work, in which I am personally a little concerned. Yesterday was published an octavo pretending to contain the correspondence of Hackman and Miss Ray that he murdered. I doubt whether the letters are genuine, and yet, if fictitious, they are executed well, and enter into his character — her's appears less natural, and yet the editors were certainly more likely to be in possession of hers than his. It is not probable that lord Sandwich should have sent what he found in her apartments to the press. No account is pretended to be given of how they came to light.

You will wonder how I should be concerned in this correspondence, who never saw either of the lovers in my days. In fact, my being dragged in is a reason for doubting the authenticity; nor can I believe that the long letter in which I am frequently mentioned, could be written by the wretched lunatic. It pretends that miss Ray desired him to give her a particular account of

Chatterton. He does give a most ample one —but is there a glimpse of probability, that a being so frantic, should have gone to Bristol, and sifted Chatterton's sister and others with as much cool curiosity as Mr. Lort could do? and at such a moment! Besides, he murdered miss Ray — I think in March; my printed defence was not at all dispersed before the preceding January or February, nor do I conceive that Hackman could even see it. There are notes indeed by the editor, who has certainly seen it — but I rather imagine that the editor, whoever he is, composed the whole volume — I am acquitted of being accessory to the lad's death, which is gracious, but much blamed for speaking of his bad character, and for being too hard on his forgeries, though I took so much pains to specify the innocence of them; and for his character, I only quoted the words of his own editor and panegyrist. I did not repeat what Dr. Goldsmith told me at the Royal Academy, where I first heard of his death, that he went by the appellation of *The Young Villain* — but it is not new to me, as you know, to be blamed by two opposite parties. The editor has in one place confounded me and my uncle, who, he says, as is true, checked lord Chatham for being too forward a young man in 1740. In that year I was not even come into parliament; and must have been absurd indeed if I had taunted lord Chatham with youth, who was at least six or

seven years younger than he was—and how could he reply by reproaching me with old age, who was then not twenty-three? I shall make no answer to these absurdities, nor to any part of the work. Blunder I see people will, and talk of what they do not understand; and what care I? There is another trifling mistake of still less consequence. The editor supposes it was Macpherson who communicated Ossian to me. It was sir David Dalrymple who sent me the first specimen. Macpherson did once come to me — but my credulity was then a little shaken.

Lady Ailesbury has promised me Guinea eggs for you, but they have not yet begun to lay.

I am well acquainted with lady Craven's little tale dedicated to me. It is careless and incorrect, but there are very pretty things in it.

I will stop, for I fear I have written to you too much lately. One you did not mention: I think it was of the 28th of last month.

Yours entirely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 30, 1780.

I CANNOT be told that you are extremely ill, and refrain from begging to hear that you are better — Let me have but one line; if it is good, it will

satisfy me. If you was not out of order, I would scold you, for again making excuses about the Noble Authors; it was not kind to be so formal about a trifle.

We do not differ so much in politics as you think, for when they grow too serious, they are so far from inflaming my zeal, they make me more moderate; and I can as easily discern the faults on my own side as on the other; nor would assist Whigs more than Tories in altering the constitution.

The project of annual parliaments, or of adding a hundred members to the House of Commons, would I think be very unwise, and will never have my approbation — but a temperate man is not likely to be listened to in turbulent times; and when one has not youth and lungs, or ambition to make oneself attended to, one can only be silent and lament, and preserve oneself blameless of any mischief that is done or attempted.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 11, 1780.

MR. Godfrey, the engraver, told me yesterday that Mr. Tyson is dead. — I am sorry for it, though he had left me off. A much older friend

of mine died yesterday, but of whom I must say the same, George Montagu, whom you must remember at Eton and Cambridge. I should have been exceedingly concerned for him a few years ago, but he had dropped me, partly from politics and partly from caprice, for we never had any quarrel; but he was grown an excessive humourist, and had shed almost all his friends as well as me. He had parts, and infinite vivacity and originality till of late years, and it grieved me much that he had changed towards me, after a friendship of between thirty and forty years.

I am told that a nephew of the provost of King's has preached and printed a most flaming sermon, which condemns the whole opposition to the stake. Pray who is it, and on what occasion? Mr. Bryant has published an answer to Dr. Priestley. I bought it, but though I have a great value for the author, the subject is so metaphysical, and so above human decision, I soon laid it aside.

I hope you can send me a good account of yourself, though the spring is so unfavourable.

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Friday night, May 19, 1780.

By to-morrow's coach you will receive a box of Guinea-hens' eggs, which lady Ailesbury sent me to-day from Park-place. I hope they will arrive safe and all be hatched.

I thank you for the account of the sermon and the portrait of the uncle. They will satisfy me without buying the former. As I knew Mr. Jos. Spence, I do not think I should have been so much delighted as Dr. Kippis with reading his letters. He was a good-natured, harmless little soul, but more like a silver penny than a genius. It was a neat fiddle-faddle, bit of sterling, that had read good books and kept good company, but was too trifling for use, and only fit to please a child.

I hesitate on purchasing Mr. Gough's second edition. I do not think there was a guinea's worth of entertainment in the first; how can the additions be worth a guinea and a half? I have been aware of the royal author you tell me of, and have noted him for a future edition; but that will not appear in my own time—because, besides that, it will have the castrations in my original copy, and other editions that I am not impatient to produce. I have been solicited to reprint the work, but do not think it fair to give a very imperfect edition, when I could print it complete, which I do not

choose to do, as I have an aversion to literary squabbles; one seems to think one's self too important, when one engages in a controversy on one's writings; and when one does not vindicate them, the answer passes for victor, as you see Dr. Kippis allots the palm to Dr. Milles, though you know I have so much more to say in defence of my hypothesis. I have actually some hopes of still more, of which I have heard, but till I see it, I shall not reckon upon it as on my side.

Mr. Lort told me of king James's procession to St. Paul's but they ask such a price for it, and I care so little for James I., that I have not been to look at the picture.

Your electioneering will probably be increased immediately. Old Mr. Thomas Townsend is at the point of death. The parliament will probably be dissolved before another session. We wanted nothing but drink to inflame our madness, which I do not confine to politics — but what signifies it to throw out general censures? We old folks are apt to think nobody wise but ourselves. — I wish the disgraces of these last two or three years did not justify a little severity more than flows from the peevishness of years!

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 30, 1780.

I hope you will bring your eggs to a fair market. At last I have got from Bonus my altar doors which I bought at Mr. Ives's; he has repaired them admirably. I would not suffer him to repaint or varnish them. Three are indubitably duke Humphrey of Gloucester, cardinal Beaufort, and archbishop Kemp. The fourth I cannot make out. It is a man in a crimson garment lined with white, and not tonsured. He is in the stable with cattle, and has the air of Joseph — but over his head hangs a large shield with these arms.[1]

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The Cornish choughs are sable on or, the other three divisions are gules, on the first of which is a gold crescent.

The second arms have three bull's heads sable, horned or. The chevron was so changed that Bonus thought it sable, but I think it was gules, and then it would be Bullen or Boleyn. Lord de Ferrars says, the first are the arms of sir Bartholomew Tate, who he finds married a Sanders. Ed-

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[1] Here Mr. Walpole had sketched in a rough draught of the arms.

mondson's new Dictionary of Heraldry confirms both arms for Tate and Sanders, except that Sanders bore the chevron ermine—which it may have been. But what I wish to discover is, whether sir Bartholomew Tate was a benefactor to St. Edmondsbury, whence these doors came, or was in any shape a retainer to the duke of Gloucester or cardinal Beaufort. The duke's and sir Bartholomew's figures were on the insides of the doors (which I have had sawed into four pannels) and are painted in a far superior style to the cardinal and the archbishop, which are very hard and dry. The two others are so good that they are in the style of the school of the Caracci. They at least were painted by some Italian; the draperies have large and bold folds, and one wonders how they could be executed in the reign of Henry VI. I shall be very glad if you can help me to any lights, at least about sir Bartholomew. I intend to place them in my chapel, as they will aptly accompany the shrine. The duke and archbishops agree perfectly with their portraits in my marriage of Henry VI., and prove how rightly I guessed. The cardinal's is rather a longer and thinner visage—but that he might have in the latter end of life; and in the marriage he has the red bonnet on, which shortens his face. On the door he is represented in the character he ought to have possessed, a pious contrite look, not the truer resemblance which Shakespear drew—he dies and makes no sign!—

but Annibal Caracci himself could not paint like our Raphael poet?—Pray don't venture yourself in any more electioneering riots—you see the mob do not respect poets, nor, I suppose Antiquaries.

P. S. I am in no haste for an answer to my queries.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 12, 1780.

MY DEAR LORD,

IF the late events had been within the common proportion of news, I would have tried to entertain your lordship with an account of them; but they were far beyond that size, and could only create horror and indignation. Religion has often been the cloak of injustice, outrage, and villany: in our late tumults, it scarce kept on its mask a moment; its persecution was downright robbery; and it was so drunk, that it killed its banditti faster than they could plunder. The tumults have been carried on in so violent and scandalous a manner, that I trust they will have no copies. When prisons are levelled to the ground, when the bank is aimed at, and reformation is attempted by conflagrations, the savages of Canada are the only fit allies of lord George Gordon and his crew. The Tower is

much too dignified a prison for him—but he had left no other.

I came out of town on Friday, having seen a good deal of the shocking transactions of Wednesday night—in fact it was difficult to be in London and not see, or think some part of it in flames—I saw those of the King's Bench, New prison, and those on the three sides of the Fleet-market, which united into one blaze. The town and parks are now one camp—the next disagreeable sight to the capital being in ashes. It will still not have been a fatal tragedy, if it brings, the nation *one* and all to their senses. It will still be not quite an unhappy country, if we reflect that the old constitution, exactly as it was in the last reign, was the most desirable of any in the universe. It made us *then* the first people in Europe—we have a vast deal of ground to recover—but can we take a better path than that which king William pointed out to us? I mean the system he left us at the revolution. I am averse to *all* changes of it—it fitted us just as it was.

For some time even individuals must be upon their guard. Our new and now imprisoned apostle has delivered so many congenial saint Peters from jail, that one hears of nothing but robberies on the highway. Your lordship's sister, lady Browne, and I have been at Twickenham-park this evening, and kept together, and had a horse-

man at our return. Baron d'Aguilar was shot at in that very lane on Thursday night. A troop of the fugitives had rendezvoused in Combe-wood, and were dislodged thence yesterday by the light-horse.

I do not know a syllable but what relates to these disturbances. The newspapers have neglected few truths. Lies, without their natural propensity to falsehoods, they could not avoid, for every minute produces some, at least exaggerations. We were threatened with swarms of good protestants *à bruler* from all quarters, and report sent various detachments from the metropolis on similar errands; but thank God they have been but reports!——Oh! when shall we have peace and tranquillity? I hope your lordship and lady Strafford will at least enjoy the latter in your charming woods. I have long doubted which of our passions is the strongest—perhaps every one of them is equally strong in some person or other—but I have no doubt but ambition is the most detestable, and the most inexcusable; for its mischiefs are by far the most extensive, and its enjoyments by no means proportioned to its anxieties. The latter, I believe, is the case of most passions—but then all but ambition cost little pain to any but the possessor. An ambitious man must be divested of all feeling but for himself. The torment of others is his high road to happiness. Were the transmigration of souls true, and accom-

panied by consciousness, how delighted would Alexander or Crœsus be to find themselves on four legs, and divested of a wish to conquer new worlds, or to heap up all the wealth of this! Adieu, my dear lord!

I am, most gratefully,
Your lordship's obedient humble servant.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 15, 1780.

You may like to know one is alive, dear sir, after a massacre, and the conflagration of a capital. I was in it, both on the Friday and on the *Black Wednesday;* the most horrible sight I ever beheld, and which, for six hours together, I expected to end in half the town being reduced to ashes. I can give you little account of the original of this shocking affair; negligence was certainly its nurse, and religion only its godmother. The ostensible author is in the Tower. Twelve or fourteen thousand men have quelled all tumults; and as no bad account is come from the country, except for a moment at Bath, and as eight days have passed—nay, more, since the commencement—I flatter myself the whole nation is shocked at the scene; and that, if plan there was, it was laid only in and for the metropolis. The lowest and

most villanous of the people, and to no great amount, were almost the sole actors.

I hope your electioneering riotry has not, nor will mix in these tumults. It would be most absurd; for lord Rockingham, the duke of Richmond, sir George Saville, and Mr. Burke, the patrons of toleration, were devoted to destruction as much as the ministers. The rails torn from sir George's house were the chief weapons and instruments of the mob. For the honour of the nation I should be glad to have it proved that the French were the engineers. You and I have lived too long for our comfort—shall we close our eyes in peace? I will not trouble you more about the arms I sent you: I should like that they were those of the family of Boleyn; and since I cannot be sure they were not, why should not I fancy them so? I revert to the prayer for peace. You and I, that can amuse ourselves with our books and papers, feel as much indignation at the turbulent as they have scorn for us. It is hard at least that they who disturb nobody can have no asylum in which to pursue their innoxious indolence! Who is secure against Jack Straw and a whirlwind? How I abominate Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, who routed the poor Otaheitans out of the centre of the ocean, and carried our abominable passions amongst them! not even that poor little speck could escape European restlessness. Well, I have seen many tempestuous scenes, and out-

lived them! the present prospect is too thick to see through—it is well hope never forsakes us. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 4, 1780.

I answer your letter the moment I receive it, to beg you will by no means take any notice, not even indirectly and without my name, of the life of Mr. Baker. I am earnest against its being known to exist. I should be teazed to show it.—Mr. Gough might inquire about it—I do not desire his acquaintance; and above all things I am determined, if I can help it, to have no controversy while I live. You know I have hitherto suppressed my answers to the critics of Richard III., for that reason;—and above all things, I hate theologic or political controversy—nor need you fear my disputing with you, though we disagree very considerably indeed about papists and presbyterians. I hope you have not yet sent the MS. to Mr. Lort, and if you have not, do entreat you to efface undecipherably what you have said about my life of Mr. Baker.

I am heartily glad you enjoy health, and am equally sorry you are teazed about Burnham. I

have, thank God, been better lately than for a year past—but I have some thoughts of going to Malvern for a month or six weeks the end of this month.

I am sorry the eggs failed. If the journey was too long, it is vain to offer you more, though I can procure them next season.

Pray satisfy me that no mention of Mr. Baker's life shall appear in print. I can by no means consent to it, and I am sure you will prevent it.

Yours sincerely.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 9, 1780.

I AM very happy at receiving a letter from your lordship this moment, as I thought it very long since we had corresponded, but am afraid of being troublesome, when I have not the excuse of thanking you, or something worth telling you, which in truth is not the case at present. No soul, whether interested or not, but deafens one about elections. I always detested them, even when in parliament; and when I lived a good deal at White's, preferred hearing of Newmarket to elections; for the former, being uttered in a language I did not understand, did not engage

my attention; but as they talked of elections in *English*, I could not help knowing what they said. It does surprise me, I own, that people can choose to stuff their heads with details and circumstances, of which in six weeks they will never hear or think more. The weather till now has been the chief topic of conversation. Of late it has been the third very hot summer; but refreshed by so little rain, that the banks of the Thames have been and are, I believe, like those of the Manzanares. The night before last we had some good showers, and to-day a thick fog has dissolved in some as thin as gauze. Still I am not quite sorry to enjoy the weather of adust climates without their tempests and insects. — Lady Cowper I lately visited, and but lately: if what I hear is true, I shall be a gainer, for they talk of lord D * * * having her house at Richmond: like your lordship, I confess I was surprised at his choice. I know nothing to the prejudice of the young lady — but I should not have selected, for so gentle and very amiable a man, a sister of the empress of fashion, nor a daughter of the goddess of wisdom.

They talk of great dissatisfactions in the fleet. Geary and Barrington are certainly retired. It looks, if this deplorable war should continue, as if all our commanders by sea and land were to be disgraced or disgusted.

The people here have christened Mr. Shirley's

new house, *Spite-hall.*[1] It is dismal to think that one may live to seventy-seven, and go out of the world doing as ill-natured an act as possible! When I am reduced to detail the gazette of Twickenham, I had better release your lordship—but either way it is from the utmost attention and respect for your lordship and lady Strafford, as I am ever

Most devotedly and gratefully yours.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 27, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

I MUST inquire how you do after all your electioneering agitations, which have growled even around your hermitage. Candidates and their emissaries are like Pope's authors,

They pierce our thickets, through our groves they glide.

However, I have barred my doors; and when I would not go to an election for myself, I would not for any one else.

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1 Because built (it was said) on purpose to intercept a view of the Thames from his opposite neighbour.

Has not a third real summer, and so very dry one, assisted your complaints? I have been remarkably well, and better than for these five years. Would I could say the same of all my friends—but, alas! I expect every day to hear that I have lost my dear old friend madame du Deffand. She was indeed near eighty-four, but retained all her interior faculties—two days ago the letters from Paris forbad all hopes. So I reckon myself dead as to France, where I have kept up no other connexion.

I am going at last to publish my fourth volume of Painters, which, though printed so long, I have literally treated by Horace's rule, *Nonumque prematur in annum*. Tell me how I shall send it to you.

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Oct. 3, 1780.

I did not go to Malvern, and therefore cannot certify you, my good sir, whether Tom Hearne mistook stone for brass or not, though I dare to say your criticism is just.

My book, if I can possibly, shall go to the inn to-morrow, or next day at least. You will find a great deal of rubbish in it, with all your partiality—but I shall have done with it.

I cannot thank you enough for your goodness about your notes that you promised Mr. Grose—but I cannot possibly be less generous and less disinterested: nor can by any means be the cause of your breaking your word. In short, I insist on your sending your notes to him—and as to my life of Mr. Baker, if it is known to exist, nobody can make me produce it sooner than I please, nor at all if I do not please; so pray send your accounts, and leave me to be stout with our antiquaries, or curious. I shall not satisfy the latter, and don't care a straw for the former.

The master of Pembroke (who he is, I don't know) is like the lover who said,

> Have I not seen thee where thou hast not been?

I have been in Kent with Mr. Barrett, but was not at Ramsgate; the master, going thither, perhaps saw me. It is a mistake not worth rectifying. I have no time for more, being in the midst of the delivery of my books.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 11, 1780.

I AM afraid you are not well, my good sir; for you are so obligingly punctual, that I think you would

have acknowledged the receipt of my last volume, if you were not out of order.

Lord Dacre lent me the new edition of Mr. Gough's Topography, and the ancient maps and quantity of additions tempted me to buy it. I have not gone through much above half of the first volume, and find it more entertaining than the first edition. This is no partiality, for I think he seems rather disposed, though civilly, to find cavils with me. Indeed, in the passage in which I am most mentioned, he not only gives a very confused, but quite a wrong account: as in other places, he records some trifles in my possession not worth recording — but I know that we antiquaries are but too apt to think, that whatever has had the honour of entering our ears, is worthy of being laid before the eyes of every body else. The story I mean is p. xi. of the preface. Now the three volumes of drawings and tombs, by Mr. Lethueillier and sir Charles Fredericke, for which Mr. G * * * says I refused 200*l.*, and are now lord Bute's — are not lord Bute's, but mine, and for which I never was asked 200*l.* and for which I gave 60*l.*—full enough. The circumstances were much more entertaining than Mr. G.'s perplexed account. Bishop Lyttleton told me sir Charles Fredericke complained of Mr. L.'s not bequeathing them to him, as he had been a joint labourer with him; and that sir Charles wished I would not bid against him for them, as they were to be

sold by auction. I said this was a very reasonable request, and that I was ready to oblige sir Charles; but as I heard others meant to bid high for the books, I should wish to know how far he would go, and that I would not oppose him—but should the books exceed the price sir Charles was willing to give, I should like to be at liberty to bid for them against others. However, added I, as sir Charles (who lived then in Berkeley-square, as I did then in Arlington-street), passes by my door every time he goes to the house of commons, if he will call on me, we will make such agreement—you will scarce believe the sequel. The dignity of sir Charles Fredericke was hurt that I should propose his making me the first visit, though to serve himself—nothing could be less out of my imagination than the ceremonial of visits; though when he was so simple as to make a point of it, I could not see how in any light I was called on to make the first visit—and so the treaty ended; and so I bought the books. There was another work, I think in two volumes, which was their Diary of their Tour, with a few slight views. Bishop Lyttleton proposed them to me, and engaged to get them for me from Mr. Lethueillier's sister for ten guineas. She hesitated, the bishop died, I thought no more of them, and they may be what lord Bute has. There is another assertion in Mr. Gough, which I can authentically contradict. He says sir Matthew Decker first introduced ananas, p. 134.

My very curious picture of Rose, the royal gardener, presenting the first ananas to Charles II. proves the culture here earlier by several years.

P. 373, he seems to doubt my assertion of Gravelot's making drawings of tombs in Gloucestershire, because he never met with any engravings from them. I took my account from Vertue, who certainly knew what he said. I bought at Vertue's own sale some of Gravelot's drawings of our regal monuments, which Vertue engraved — but, which is stronger, Mr. Gough himself a few pages after, viz. in p. 387, mentions Gravelot's drawings of Tewkesbury church—which being in Gloucestershire, Mr. G. might have believed me that Gravelot did draw in that county. This is a little like Mr. Masters's being angry with me for taking liberties with bishops and chancellors, and then abusing grossly one who had been both bishop and chancellor. I forgot that in the note on sir Charles Fredericke, Mr. Gough calls Mr. Worseley, Wortley. In p. 354, he says Rooker exhibited a drawing of Waltham-cross to the Royal Academy of Sciences — pray where is that academy? I suppose he means that of painting. I find a few omissions; one very comical; he says Penshurst was celebrated by Ben Jonson, and seems totally in the dark as to how much more fame it owes to Waller. We antiquaries are a little apt to get laughed at for knowing what every body has forgotten, and for being ignorant

of what every child knows. Do not tell him of these things, for I do not wish to vex him. I hope I was mistaken, and shall hear that you are well.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 24, 1780.

I AM sorry I was so much in the right in guessing you had been ill, but at our age there is little sagacity in such divination. In my present holidays from the gout, I have a little rheumatism, or some of those accompaniments.

I have made several more notes to the new Topography, but none of consequence enough to transcribe. It is well it is a book only for the adept, or the scorners would often laugh. Mr. Gough, speaking of some cross that has been removed, says, there is now *an unmeaning market-house* in its place. Saving his reverence and our prejudices, I doubt there is a good deal more *meaning* in a market-house than in a cross. They tell me that there are numberless mistakes. Mr. Pennant, whom I saw yesterday, says so. *He* is not one of our plodders; rather the other extreme. His *corporal* spirits (for I cannot call them animal) do not allow him time to digest any thing: He gave a round jump from ornithology to anti-

quity — and, as if they had any relation, thought he understood every thing that lay between them. These adventures divert me who am got on shore, and find how sweet it is to look back on those who are toiling in deep waters, whether in ships, or cock-boats, or on old rotten planks. I am sorry for the dean of Exeter; if he dies, I conclude the leaden mace of the Antiquarian Society will be given to judge Barrington,

et simili frondescet Virga metallo.

I endeavoured to give our antiquaries a little wrench towards taste—but it was in vain. Sandby and our engravers have lent them a great deal — but there it stops. Captain Grose's dissertations are as dull and silly as if they were written for the Ostrogoth maps of the beginning of the New Topography; and which are so square and so incomprehensible that they look as if they were ichnographies of the new Jerusalem. I am delighted with having done with the professions of author and printer, and intend to be most comfortably lazy, I was going to say idle (but that would not be new) for the rest of my days.

If there was a peace, I would build my offices— if there is not soon, we shall be bankrupt—nay, I do not know what may happen as it is—well! Mr. Grose will have plenty of ruins to engrave! The Royal Academy will make a fine mass, with what remains of old Somerset-house.

Adieu! my good sir! Let me know you are well. You want nothing else, for you can always amuse yourself, and do not let the foolish world disturb you.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 30, 1780.

I AM sorry, my dear sir, that you should be so humble with me your ancient friend, and to whom you have ever been so liberal, as to make an apology for desiring me to grant the request of another person. I am not less sorry that I shall not, I fear, be able to comply with it; and you must have the patience to hear my reasons. The first edition of the Anecdotes was of three hundred, of the two first volumes; and of as many of the third volume, and of the volume of engravers. Then there was an edition of three hundred of all four. Unluckily I did not keep any number back of the two first volumes, and literally have none but those I reserved for myself. Of the other two I have two or three; and, I believe, I have a first, but without the cuts. If I can, with some odd volumes that I kept for corrections, make out a decent set, the library of the University shall have them; but you must not promise them, lest I should not be able to perform.

Of my new fourth volume I printed six hundred; but as they *can* be had, I believe not a third part is sold. This, a very plain lesson to me, that my editions sell for their curiosity, and not for any merit in them—and so they would if I printed Mother Goose's Tales, and but a few. As my Anecdotes of Painting have been published at such distant periods, and in three divisions, complete sets will be seldom seen; so, if I am humbled as an author, I may be vain as a printer; and, when one has nothing else to be vain of, it is certainly very little worth while to be proud of that.

I will now trust you with a secret, but beg Mr. Gough may not know it, for he will print it directly. Though I forgot *Alma Mater*, I have not forgotten my *Almæ Nutrices*, wet or dry, I mean Eton and King's. I have laid aside for them, and left them in my will, as complete a set as I could, of all I have printed. A few I did give them at first—but I have for neither a perfect set of the Anecdotes, I mean not the two first volumes. I should be much obliged to you, if, without naming me, you could inform yourself if I did send to King's those two first volumes—I believe not.

I will now explain what I said above of Mr. Gough. He has learnt, I suppose from my engravers, that I have had some views of Strawberry-hill engraved.—Slap dash, down it went, and he has even specified each view in his second volume.

This curiosity is a little impertinent — but he has made me some amends by a new blunder, for he says they are engraved for a second edition of my Catalogue. Now I have certainly printed but one edition, for which the prints are designed. He says truly, that I printed but a few for use; consequently, I by no means wished the whole world should know it; but he is very silly, and so I will say no more about him. Dr. Lort called yesterday, and asked if I had any message for you; but I had written too lately.

Mr. Pennant has been, as I think I told you, in town: by this time I conclude he is, as lady Townley says of fifty pounds, all over the kingdom. When Dr. Lort returns, I shall be very glad to read your transcript of Wolsey's Letters; *for*, in your hand, I *can* read them. I will not have them but by some very safe conveyance, and will return them with equal care.

I can have no objection to Robin Masters being wooden-head of the Antiquarian Society; but, I suppose, he is not dignified enough for them. I should prefer the judge too, because a coif makes him more like an old woman, and I reckon that Society the midwives of superannuated miscarriages. I am grieved for the return of your head-aches — I doubt you write too much.

Yours most sincerely.

P. S. It will be civil to tell Dr. Farmer that I

do not know whether I can obey his commands; but that I will, if I can. As to a distinguished place, I beg not to be preferred to much better authors; nay, the more conspicuous, the more likely to be stolen for the reasons I have given you, of there being few complete sets, and true collectors are mighty apt to steal.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Dec, 19, 1780.

I CANNOT leave you for a moment in error, my good sir, when you transfer a compliment to me, to which I have not the most slender claim; and defraud another of it to whom it is due.

The friend of Mr. Gray, in whom authorship caused no jealousy, or variance, as Mr. Mainwaring says truly, is Mr. Mason. *I* certainly never excelled in poetry, and never attempted the species of poetry alluded to, odes. Dr. L. I suppose is removing to a living or a prebend, at least; I hope so. He may run a risk if he carries his book to Lambeth. *Sono sonate ventri tre hore e mezza*, as Alexander VIII. said to his nephew, when he was chosen pope in extreme old age. My lord of Canterbury's is not extreme, but very tottering. I found in Mr. Gough's new edition, that in the Pepysian library is a view of the theatre in Dorset

Gardens, and views of four or five other ancient great mansions. Do the folk of Magdalen ever suffer copies of such things to be taken? if they would, is there any body at Cambridge that could execute them, and reasonably? answer me quite at your leisure; and, also, what and by whom the altar-piece is, that lord Carlisle has given to King's. I did not know he had been of our college. I have two or three plates of Strawberry more than those you mention, but my collections are so numerous, and from various causes my prints have been in such confusion, that at present I neither know where the plates or proofs are. I intend next summer to set about completing my plan of the catalogue and its prints; and, when I have found any of the plates or proofs, you shall certainly have those you want. There are the two large views of the house, one of the cottage, one of the library, one of the front to the road, and the chimney-piece in the Holbein room. I think these are all that are finished—oh! yes, I believe the prior's garden; but I have not seen them these two years. I was so ill the summer before last, that I attended to nothing; the little I thought of in that way last summer, was to get out my last volume of the Anecdotes—now I have nothing to trouble myself about as an editor, and that not publicly, but to finish my catalogue —and that will be awkwardly enough; for so many articles have been added to my collection

since the description was made, that I must add them in the appendix, or reprint it; and, what is more inconvenient, the positions of many of the pictures have been changed; and so it will be a lame piece of work. Adieu, my dear sir,

Yours most cordially.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

January 3, 1781.

AFTER I had written my note to you last night, I called on * * * * * *, who gave me the dismal account of Jamaica, that you will see in the gazette, and of the damage done to our shipping. Admiral Rowley is safe; but they are in apprehensions for Walsingham. He told me too what is not in the gazette; that of the expedition against the Spanish settlements, not a single man survives! The papers to-day, I see, speak of great danger to Gibraltar.

* * * * * * * * * * * repeated to me his great desire that you should publish your speech,[1] as he told you. I do not conceive why *he* is so eager for it, for he professes total despair about America.

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[1] Introductory of a motion "for leave to bring in a bill for "quieting the troubles that have for some time subsisted be-"tween Great Britain and America, and enabling his majesty to "send out commissioners with full power to treat with America "for that purpose."

It looks to me as if there was a wish of throwing the blame somewhere — but I profess I am too simple to dive into the objects of shades of intrigues; nor do I care about them. We shall be reduced to a miserable little island; and from a mighty empire sink into as insignificant a country as Denmark or Sardinia! When our trade and marine are gone, the latter of which we keep up by unnatural efforts, to which our debt will put a stop, we shall lose the East Indies as Portugal did; and then France will dictate to us more imperiously than ever we did to Ireland, which is in a manner already gone too! These are mortifying reflections, to which an English mind cannot easily accommodate itself — But, alas! we have been pursuing the very conduct that France would have prescribed, and more than with all her presumption she could have dared to expect. Could she flatter herself that we would take no advantage of the dilatoriness and unwillingness of Spain to enter into the war? that we would reject the disposition of Russia to support us? and that our still more natural friend Holland would be driven into the league against us? All this has happened; and, like an infant, we are delighted with having set our own frock in a blaze! — I sit and gaze with astonishment at our phrensy — Yet why? Are not nations as liable to intoxication as individuals? Are not predictions founded on calculation oftener rejected than the prophecies of dreamers?

Do we not act precisely like Charles Fox, who thought he had discovered a new truth in figures, when he preached that wise doctrine, that nobody could want money that would pay enough for it? — The consequence was, that in two years he left himself without the possibility of borrowing a shilling. I am not surprised at the spirits of a boy of parts — I am not surprised at the people — I do wonder at government, that games away its consequence. For what are we now really at war with America, France, Spain, and Holland?—Not with hopes of reconquering America, not with the smallest prospect of conquering a foot of land from France, Spain, or Holland — No; we are at war on the defensive, to protect what is left, or more truly to stave off, for a year perhaps, a peace that must proclaim our nakedness and impotence. I would not willingly recur to that womanish vision of, something may turn up in our favour! That something must be a naval victory that will annihilate at once all the squadrons of Europe — must wipe off forty millions of new debt — reconcile the affections of America, that for six years we have laboured to alienate: and that must recall out of the grave the armies and sailors that are perished—and that must make thirteen provinces willing to receive the law, without the necessity of keeping ten thousand men amongst them. The gigantic imagination of lord Chatham would not entertain such a chimera. Lord * * * * * perhaps

would say he did, rather than not undertake; or Mr. Burke could form a metaphoric vision that would satisfy no imagination but his own: but I, who am *nullius addictus jurare in verba*, have no hopes either in our resources or in our geniuses, and look on my country already as undone! — It is grievous — but I shall not have much time to lament its fall!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 7, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

I WILL not leave you a moment in suspense about the safety of your very valuable volume, which you have so kindly sent me, and which I have just received, with the enclosed letters, and your other yesterday. I have not time to add a word more at present, being full of business, having the night before last received an account of lady Orford's death at Pisa, and a copy of her will, which obliges me to write several letters, and to see my relations. She has left every thing in her power to her *friend* cavalier Mozzi, at Florence; but her son comes into a large estate, besides her great jointure. You may imagine, how I lament that he had not patience to wait sixteen months, before he sold his pictures!

I am very sorry you have been at all indisposed. I will take the utmost care of your 59th volume (for which I give you this receipt) and will restore it the instant I have had time to go through it.

Witness my hand.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Feb. 9, 1781.

I had not time, dear sir, when I wrote last, to answer your letter, nor do more than cast an eye on your MS. To say the truth, my patience is not tough enough to go through Wolsey's negotiations. I see that *your* perseverance was forced to make the utmost efforts to transcribe them. They are immeasurably verbose, not to mention the blunders of the first copyist. As I read only for amusement, I cannot, so late in my life, purchase information on what I do not much care about, at the price of a great deal of *ennui*. The old wills at the end of your volume diverted me much more than the obsolete politics. I shall say nothing about what you call *your old leaven*. Every body must judge for himself in those matters: nor are you or I of an age to change long-formed opinions, as neither of us is governed by self-interest. Pray tell me how I may most safely return your volume. I value all your MSS. so much, that I should never forgive myself, if a

single one came to any accident, by your so obligingly lending them to me. They are great treasures, and contain something or other that must suit most tastes: not to mention your amazing industry, neatness, legibility, with notes, arms, &c. — I know no such repositories. You will receive with your MS. Mr. Kerrick's and Mr. Gough's letters. The former is very kind. The inauguration of the *Antiquated* Society is burlesque — and so is their dearth of materials for another volume: can they ever want such rubbish as compose their preceding annals?

I think it probable, that *story* should be *stone*: however, I never piqued myself on recording every mason. I have preserved but too many that did not deserve to be mentioned. I dare to say, that when I am gone, many more such will be added to my volumes. I had not heard of poor Mr. Pennant's misfortune. I am very sorry for it, for I believe him to be a very honest good-natured man. He certainly was too lively for his proportion of understanding, and too impetuous to make the best use of what he had. However, it is a credit to us antiquaries to have one of our class disordered by vivacity.

I hope your goutiness is dissipated, and that this last fine week has set you on your feet again.

Yours most sincerely and gratefully.

P. S. Your letters were all put into the post.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 2, 1781.

Dear Sir,

As you have not lighted on a trusty person to fetch your MS. I am unwilling to detain it longer from you, and therefore shall send my printer with it to-morrow morning to the Green Dragon, according to your directions; though I should not have ventured it in that manner, unless you yourself had warranted me. I do not know on what day the waggon sets out, but I have ordered the book to be left at Mr. Salmon's, at Cambridge, till called for.

My lady Orford ordered herself to be buried at Leghorn, the only place in Tuscany where protestants have burial. Therefore I suppose she did not affect to change. On the contrary, I believe she had no preference for any *sect*, but rather laughed at all. I know nothing new, neither in novelty nor antiquity. I have had no gout this winter, and therefore I call it my *leap year*. I am sorry it is not yours too. It is an age since I saw Dr. Lort. I hope illness is not the cause.

You will be diverted with hearing that I am chosen an honorary member of the new Antiquarian Society at Edinburgh; I accepted for two reasons. First, it is a feather that does not demand my flying thither; and secondly, to show

contempt for our own old fools. To me it will be a perfect sinecure; for I have moulted all my pen feathers, and shall have no ambition of nestling into their printed transactions. Adieu, my good sir,

Your much obliged.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

March 5, 1781.

You will have found by a letter that I thought you would receive yesterday, that I sent your MS. dear sir, to the Green Dragon in Bishopsgate-street, and I shall be very glad to hear that you have received it safe.

I do not in the least guess or imagine what you mean by lord Hardwicke's publication of a *Walpoliana*. Naturally it should mean a collection of sayings or anecdotes of my father, according to the French *Anas;* which began, I think, with those of Menage. Or, is it a collection of letters and state-papers during his administration? I own I am curious to know at least what this piece contains. I had not heard a word of it; and, were it not for the name, I should have very little inquisitiveness about it: for nothing upon earth ever was duller than the three heavy tomes his lordship printed of sir Dudley Carleton's Negotiations, and

of what he called State Papers. Pray send me an answer as soon as you can, at least of as much as you have heard about this thing.

I shall be obliged to you for a sight of the old wills you mention, but not just yet, as I should not have time to read them now, and might detain them too long.

Your MS. went to the Green Dragon on Friday night, and they said the waggon would set out the next day.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 29, 1781.

You are so good-natured that I am sure you will be glad to be told that the report of Mr. Pennant being disordered is not true. He is come to town—has been with me, and at least is as composed as ever I saw him. He is going to publish another part of his Welch tour, which he can well afford, though I believe he does not lose by his works. An aunt is dead exceedingly rich, who had given some thousands to him and his daughter, but suddenly changed her mind and left all to his sister, who has most nobly given him all that had been destined in the cancelled will.

Dr. Nash has just published the first volume of

his Worcestershire. It is a folio of prodigious corpulence, and yet dry enough—but then it is finely dressed, and has many heads and views.

Dr. Lort was with me yesterday, and I never saw him better, nor has he been much out of order. I hope your gout has left you; but here are winds bitter enough to give one any thing.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

April 3, 1781.

I AM very sorry, dear sir, that in my last letter but one I took no notice of what you said about lord Hardwicke; the truth was I am perfectly indifferent about what he prints or publishes. There is generally a little indirect malice, but so much more dullness, that the latter soon suffocates the former. This is telling you that I could not be offended at any thing you said of him — nor am I likely to suspect a sincere friend of disobliging me. You have proved the direct contrary these forty years. I have not time to say more, but am

Ever most truly,

Yours.

P. S. I am very sorry you have been indisposed again.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 4, 1781.

I shall not only be ready to show Strawberry-hill, at any time he chooses, to Dr. Farmer, as your friend; but to be honoured with his acquaintance; though I am very shy now of contracting new. I have great respect for his character and abilities, and judicious taste; and am very clear that he has elucidated Shakspeare in a more reasonable and satisfactory manner, than any of his affected commentators, who only complimented him with learning that he had not, in order to display their own.

Pray give me timely notice whenever I am likely to see Dr. Farmer, that I may not be out of the way, when I can have an opportunity of showing attention to a friend of yours and pay a small part of your gratitude to him. There shall be a bed at his service; for you know Strawberry cannot be seen in a moment; nor are Englishmen so *liants* as to get acquainted in the time they are walking through a house.

But now my good sir, how could you suffer your prejudiced partiality to me, to run away with you so extravagantly, as to call me one of the greatest characters of the age? You are too honest to flatter, too much a hermit to be interested, and I am too powerless and insignificant to be an object of court, were you capable of paying it from merce-

nary views. I know then that it could proceed from nothing but the warmth of your heart.—But if you are blind towards me, I am not so to myself. I know not how others feel on such occasions; but if any one happens to praise me, all my faults rush into my face, and make me turn my eyes inward and outward with horror. What am I but a poor old skeleton tottering towards the grave, and conscious of ten thousand weaknesses, follies, and worse! and, for talents, what are mine, but trifling and superficial; and, compared with those of men of real genius, most diminutive! Mine a great character! mercy on me! I am a composition of Anthony Wood and madame Dânois, and I know not what trumpery writers. This is the least I can say to refute your panegyric, which I shall burn presently; for I will not have such an encomiastic letter found in my possession, lest I should seem to have been pleased with it. I enjoin you, as a penance, not to contradict one tittle I have said here; for I am not begging more compliments, and shall take it seriously ill, if you ever pay me another. We have been friends above forty years; I am satisfied of your sincerity and affection—but does it become us at past threescore each, to be saying fine things to one another?—consider how soon we shall both be nothing.

I assure you, with great truth, I am at this present very sick of my little vapour of fame. My tragedy has wandered into the hands of some ban-

ditti booksellers; and I am forced to publish it myself to prevent piracy. All I can do is to condemn it myself; and that I shall.

I am reading Mr. Pennant's new Welch tour; he has pleased me by making very handsome mention of you.—But I will not do what I have been blaming.

My poor dear madame du Deffand's little dog is arrived. She made me promise to take care of it the last time I saw her; that I will most religiously, and make it as happy as is possible. I have not much curiosity to see your Cambridge Raphael, but great desire to see you, and will certainly this summer accept your invitation, which I take much kinder than your *great character,* though both flowed from the same friendship. Mine for you is exactly what it has been ever since you knew (and few men can boast so uninterrupted a friendship as yours and that of)

P. S. I have seen the Monthly Review.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sunday evening, May 6, 1781.

I SUPPED with your countess on Friday at lord Frederick Campbell's, where I heard of the relief of Gibraltar by Darby. The Spanish fleet kept

close in Cadiz:—however, he lifted up his leg, and just squirted contempt on them. As he is disembarrassed of his transports, I suppose their ships will scramble on shore rather than fight. Well, I shall be perfectly content with our fleet coming back in a whole skin. It will be enough to have outquixoted Don Quixote's own nation. As I knew your countess would write the next day, I waited till she was gone out of town and would not have much to tell you—not that I have either; and it is giving myself an air, to pretend to know more at Twickenham than she can at Henley. Though it is a bitter north-east, I came hither to-day to look at my lilacs, though *à la glace*, and to get from Pharaoh, for which there is a rage. I doted on it above thirty years ago; but it is not decent to sit up all night now with boys and girls. * * * *, the banker *à la mode*, has been demolished. He and his associate sir * * * * * * * * went early t'other night to Brookes's, before Charles Fox and Fitzpatrick, who keep a bank there, were come. But they soon arrived, attacked their rivals, broke their bank, and won above 4000*l.* "There," said Fox, "so should all usurpers be served!"—He did still better; for he sent for his tradesmen, and paid as far as the money would go.—In the mornings he continues his war on lord North—but cannot break *that* bank. The court has carried a secret committee for India affairs—and it is supposed

that Rumbold is to be the sacrifice:—but as he is near as rich as lord Clive, I conclude he will escape by the same golden key.

I told you in my last, that Tonton [1] was arrived. I brought him this morning to take possession of his new villa; but his inauguration has not been at all pacific. As he has already found out that he may be as despotic as at saint Joseph's, he began with exiling my beautiful little cat;—upon which, however, we shall not quite agree. He then flew at one of my dogs, who returned it, by biting his foot till it bled; but was severely beaten for it. I immediately rung for Margaret [2] to dress his foot; but in the midst of my tribulation could not keep my countenance; for she cried, "Poor little thing, he does not understand my language!"——I hope she will not recollect too that he is a Papist!

Berkeley-square, Tuesday, May 8.

I CAME before dinner, and find your long letter of the 3d. You have mistaken Tonton's sex, who is a cavalier, and a little of the *mousquetaire* still; but if I do not correct his vivacities, at least I shall not encourage them like my dear old friend.

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[1] Madame du Deffand's dog, which she left by will to Mr. Walpole.

[2] Mr. Walpole's house-keeper.

You say nothing of your health: therefore, I trust, it is quite re-established. My own is most flourishing for me.

They say the parliament will rise by the birth-day — not that it seems to be any grievance or confinement to any body. I hope you will soon come [1] and enjoy a quiet summer under the laurels of your own conscience. They are at least as spreading as any body's else; and the soil will preserve their verdure for ever. Methinks we western powers might as well make peace, since we make war so clumsily.—Yet I doubt the awkwardness of our enemies will not have brought down our stomach. Well, I wish for the sake of mankind there was an end of their sufferings! Even spectators are not amused — the whole war has passed like the riotous murmurs of the upper gallery before the play begins — they have pelted the candle-snuffers, the stage has been swept, the music has played, people have taken their places —but the deuce a bit of any performance!—And when folks go home, they will have seen nothing but a farce, that has cost fifty times more than the best tragedy!

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[1] From Jersey.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, May [June] 16, 1781.

YOUR last account of yourself was so indifferent, that I am impatient for a better: pray send me a much better.

I know little in your way but that sir Richard Worseley has just published a History of the Isle of Wight, with many views poorly done enough. Mr. Bull is honouring me, at least my Anecdotes of Painting, exceedingly. He has let every page into a pompous sheet, and is adding every print of portrait, building, &c. that I mention, and that he can get, and specimens of all our engravers. It will make eight magnificent folios, and be a most valuable body of our arts. Nichols the printer has published a new Life of Hogarth of near two hundred pages — many more, in truth, than it required — chiefly it is *the life* of his works, containing all the variations, and notices of any persons whom he had in view. I cannot say there are discoveries of many prints which I have not mentioned, though I hear Mr. Gulston says he has fifteen such; but I suppose he only fancies so. Mr. Nichols says our printsellers are already adding Hogarth's name to several spurious. Mr. Stevens, I hear, has been allowed to ransack Mrs. Hogarth's house for obsolete and unfinished plates, which are to be completed and published. Though

she was not pleased with my account of her husband, and seems by these transactions to have encouraged the second, I assure you I have much more reason to be satisfied than she has, the editor or editors being much civiller to living me than to dead Hogarth — yet I should not have complained. Every body has the same right to speak their sentiments. Nay, in general I have gentler treatment than I expected, and I think the world and I part good friends.

I am now setting about the completion of my Odes Strawberrianæ. A painter is to come hither on Monday to make a drawing of the Tribune, and finish T. Sandby's fine view of the gallery, to which I could never get him to put the last hand. They will then be engraved with a few of the chimney-pieces, which will complete the plates. I must add an appendix of curiosities, purchased or acquired since the catalogue was printed. This will be awkward, but I cannot afford to throw away an hundred copies. I shall take care if I can that Mr. Gough does not get fresh intelligence from my engravers, or he will advertize my supplement, before the book appears. I do not think it was very civil to publish such private intelligence, to which he had no right without my leave; but every body seems to think he may do what is good in his own eyes. I saw the other day, in a collection of seats (exquisitely engraved) a very rude insult on the duke of Devonshire.

The designer went to draw a view of Chiswick, without asking leave, and was—not hindered, for he has given it; but he says he was treated *illiberally*, the house not being shown without tickets, which he not only censures, but calls a singularity, though a frequent practice in other places, and practised *there* to my knowledge for these thirty years—so every body is to come into your house, if he pleases, draw it whether you please or not, and by the same rule, I suppose, put any thing into his pockets that he likes. I do know, by experience, what a grievance it is to have a house worth being seen, and though I submit in consequence to great inconveniences, they do not save me from many rudenesses. Mr. Southcote was forced to shut up his garden, for the savages who came as connoisseurs, scribbled a thousand brutalities, in the buildings, upon his religion. I myself, at Canons, saw a beautiful table of oriental alabaster that had been split in two by a buck in boots jumping up backwards to set upon it.

I have placed the oaken head of Henry III. over the middle arch of the armoury. Pray tell me what the church of Barnwell, near Oundle, was, which his majesty endowed, and whence his head came.

Yours most sincerely.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, May 26, 1781.

This letter, like an embarkation, will not set out till it has gotten its complement; but I begin it, as I have just received your second letter. I wrote to you two days ago, and did not mean to complain; for you certainly cannot have variety of matter in your sequestered isle: and since you do not disdain trifling news, this good town, that furnishes nothing else, at least produces weeds, which shoot up in spite of the *Scotch thistles*, that have choked all good fruits. I do not know what lady C * * * designs to do with her play; I hope, act it only in private; for her other was murdered, and the audience did not exert the least gallantry to so pretty an authoress, though she gave them so fair an opportunity. For my own play, I was going to publish it in my own defence, as a spurious edition was advertised here, besides one in Ireland.—My advertisement has overlaid the former for the present, and that tempts me to suppress mine, as I have a thorough aversion to its appearance. Still, I think I shall produce it in the dead of summer, that it may be forgotten by winter; for I could not bear having it the subject of conversation in a full town. It is printed; so I can let it steal out in the midst of the first event that engrosses the public; and as it is not quite a

novelty, I have no fear but it will be still-born, if it is twin with any babe that squalls and makes much noise.——At the same time with yours I received a letter from another cousin at Paris, who tells me Necker is on the verge, and in the postscript says, he has actually resigned. I heard so a few days ago; but this is a full confirmation. Do you remember a conversation at your house, at supper, in which a friend of yours spoke very unfavourably of Necker, and seemed to wish his fall? In my own opinion, they are much in the wrong. It is true, Necker laboured with all his shoulders to restore their finances; yet I am persuaded that his attention to that great object made him clog all their military operations. They will pay dearer for money; but money they will have — nor is it so dear to them; for, when they have gotten it, they have only not to pay. A monsieur Joly de Fleury is comptroller-general. I know nothing of him — but as they change so often, some able man will prove minister at last— and there they will have the advantage again.

Lord Cornwallis's courier, Mr. Broderic, is not yet arrived; so you are a little precipitate in thinking America so much nearer to being subdued, which you have often swallowed up as if you were a minister; and yet, methinks, that era has been so frequently put off, that I wonder you are not cured of being sanguine — or rather, of believing the magnificent lies that every trifling

advantage gives birth to. If a quarter of the Americans had joined the royalists, that have been said to join, all the colonies would not hold them. But, at least, they have been like the trick of kings and queens at cards; where one of two goes back every turn to fetch another. However, this is only for conversation for the moment. With such aversion to disputation, I have no zeal for making converts to my own opinion, not even on points that touch me nearer.

Thursday, May 31.

If you see the papers, you will find that there was a warm debate yesterday on a fresh proposal from Harley for pacification with America; in which the ministers were roundly reproached with their boasts of the returning zeal of the colonies; and which, though it ought by their own accounts to be so much nearer complete, they could not maintain to be at all effectual; though even yesterday a report was revived of a second victory of lord Cornwallis. This debate prevented another on the marriage bill, which Charles Fox wants to get repealed, and which he told me he was going to labour. I mention this from the circumstance of the moment when he told me so. I had been to see if lady A * * * * was come to town: as I came up St. James's-street, I saw a cart and porters at C * * * 's door; coppers and old chests of drawers loading. — In short, his success at faro has awa-

kened his host of creditors — but unless his bank had swelled to the size of the bank of England, it could not have yielded a sop a-piece for each. Epsom too had been unpropitious — and one creditor has actually seized and carried off his goods, which did not seem worth removing. As I returned full of this scene, whom should I find sauntering by my own door but C.? He came up and talked to me at the coach-window, on the marriage bill, with as much *sang froid* as if he knew nothing of what had happened.—I have no admiration for insensibility to one's own faults, especially when committed out of vanity. Perhaps the whole philosophy consisted in the commission. If *you* could have been as much to blame, the last thing you would bear well would be your own reflections. The more marvellous Fox's parts are, the more one is provoked at his follies, which comfort so many rascals and blockheads; and make all that is admirable and amiable in him, only matter of regret to those who like him as I do.

I did intend to settle at Strawberry on Sunday; but must return on Thursday, for a party made at Marlborough-house for princess Amelia. I am continually tempted to retire entirely—and should —if I did not see how very unfit English tempers are for living quite out of the world. We grow abominably peevish and severe on others, if we are not constantly rubbed against and polished by

them. I need not name friends and relations of yours and mine as instances. My prophecy on the short reign of faro is verified already. The bankers find that all the calculated advantages of the game do not balance pinchbeck *parolis* and debts of honourable women. — The bankers, I think, might have had a previous and more generous reason, the very bad air of holding a bank: — but this country is as hardened against the *petite morale*, as against the greater. — What should I think of the world if I quitted it entirely?

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 3, 1781.

You know I have more philosophy about *you* than courage; yet for once I have been very brave. There was an article in the papers last week that said, a letter from Jersey mentioned apprehensions of being attacked by 4000 French.—Do you know that I treated the paragraph with scorn?—No, no: I am not afraid for your island, when you are at home in it, and have had time to fortify it, and have sufficient force. No, no: it will not be surprised when you are there, and when our fleet is returned, and Digby before Brest.—However, with all my valour, I could not help going to your brother to ask a few questions—but he

had heard of no such letter. The French would be foolish indeed if they ran their heads a third time against your rocks, when watched by the most vigilant of all governors. Your nephew G * * * is arrived with the fleet: my door opened t'other morning; I looked towards the common horizon of heads, but was a foot and a half below any face. The handsomest giant in the world made but one step cross my room; and, seizing my hand, gave it such a robust gripe, that I squalled; for he crushed my poor chalk-stones to powder. When I had recovered from the pain of his friendly salute, I said, "It must be G * * * * C * * * *: and yet is it possible?—Why, it is not fifteen months ago since you was but six feet high."—In a word, he is within an inch of Robert and Edward, with larger limbs, almost as handsome as Hugh, with all the bloom of youth; and —in short, another of those comely sons of Anak, the breed of which your brother and lady Hertford have piously restored for the comfort of the daughters of Sion. He is delighted with having tapped his warfare with the siege of Gibraltar, and burns to stride to America. The town, he says, is totally destroyed; and between two and three hundred persons were killed.——Well! it is pity lady Hertford has done breeding: we shall want such a race to re-people even the ruins we do not lose! The rising generation does give one some hopes. — I confine myself to some of this

year's birds. The young William Pitt has again displayed paternal oratory. The other day, on the commission of accounts, he answered lord North, and tore him limb from limb. If Charles Fox could feel, one should think such a rival, with an unspotted character, would rouse him —— What, if a Pitt and Fox should again be rivals! —— A still newer orator has appeared in the India business, a Mr. Banks, and against lord North too — and with a merit, that the very last crop of orators left out of their rubric—modesty. As young Pitt is modest too, one would hope some genuine English may revive!

Tuesday, June 5.

THIS is the season of opening my cake-house. I have chosen a bad spot, if I meant to retire; and calculated ill, when I made it a puppet-show.

Last week we had two or three mastiff-days; for they were fiercer than our common dog-days. It is cooled again; but rain is as great a rarity as in Egypt; and father Thames is so far from being a Nile, that he is dying for thirst himself.—But it would be prudent to reserve paragraphs of weather till people are gone out of town; for then I can have little to send you else from hence.

Berkeley-square, June 6.

As soon as I came to town to-day Le Texier called on me, and told me he has miscarried of

Pygmalion. The expense would have mounted to 150*l.* and he could get but sixty subscribers at a guinea a-piece. I am glad his experience and success have taught him thrift — I did not expect it. Sheridan had a heavier miscarriage last night. The two Vestris had imagined a fête; and, concluding that whatever they designed would captivate the town and its purses, were at the expense of 1200*l.* and, distributing tickets at two guineas a-piece, disposed of not two hundred. It ended in a bad opera, that began three hours later than usual, and at quadruple the price. There were bushels of dead flowers, lamps, country dances — and a cold supper —— Yet they are not abused as poor Le Texier was last year.

June 8.

I CONCLUDE my letter, and I hope our present correspondence, very agreeably; for your brother told me last night, that you have written to lord Hillsborough for leave to return. If all our governors could leave their dominions in as good plight, it were lucky. Your brother owned, what the Gazette with all its circumstances cannot conceal, that lord Cornwallis's triumphs have but increased our losses, without leaving any hopes. I am told that his army, which when he parted from Clinton amounted to 17,000 men, does not now contain above as many hundred, except the detachments. The Gazette, to my sorrow and your

greater sorrow, speaks of colonel O'Hara having received two dangerous wounds.

Princess Amelia was at Marlborough-house last night, and played at faro till twelve o'clock — There ends the winter campaign! —— I go to Strawberry-hill to-morrow; and I hope, *à l'Irlandoise*, that the next letter I write to you — will be not to write to you any more.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 13, 1781.

IT was very kind, my dear lord, to recollect me so soon: I wish I could return it by amusing you; but here I know nothing, and suppose it is owing to age that even in town I do not find the transactions of the world very entertaining. One must sit up all night to see or hear any thing — and if the town intends to do any thing, they never begin to do it till next day.

Mr. Conway will certainly be here the end of this month, having thoroughly secured his island from surprise, and it is not liable to be taken any other way. I wish he was governor of this bigger one too, which does not seem quite so well guaranteed.

Your lordship will wonder at a visit I had yes-

terday: it was from Mr. * *.* * *, who has passed a day and night here. It was not from my being a fellow-scholar of Vestris, but from his being turned antiquary; the last patina I should have thought a Macaroni would have taken. I am as proud of such a disciple as of having converted Dicky Bateman from a Chinese to a Goth. Though he was the founder of the Sharawadgi taste in England, I preached so effectually that his every pagoda took the veil. The methodists say, one must have been very wicked before one can be of the elect—yet is that extreme more distant from *the ton*, which avows knowing and liking nothing but the fashion of the instant, to studying what were the modes of five hundred years ago? I hope this conversion will not ruin Mr. * * * * *'s fortune under the lord lieutenant of Ireland. How his Irish majesty will be shocked when he asks how large prince B * * * * *'s shoe-buckles are grown, to be answered, he does not know, but that Charles Brandon's cod-piece at the last birth-day had three yards of velvet in it! and that the duchess of Buckingham thrust out her chin two inches farther than ever in admiration of it! and that the marchioness of Dorset had put out her jaw by endeavouring to imitate her!

We have at last had some rains, which I hope extended to Yorkshire, and that your lordship has found Wentworth-castle in the bloom of verdure.

I always, as in duty bound, wish prosperity to every body and every thing there, and am

Your lordship's ever devoted
and grateful humble servant.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 7, 1781.

My good sir, you forget that I have a cousin, eldest son of lord Walpole, and of a marriageable age, who has the same Christian name as I. The miss Churchill he has married is my niece, second daughter of my sister, lady Mary Churchill, so that if I were in my dotage, I must have looked out for another bride—in short, I hope you will have no occasion to wish me joy of any egregious folly. I do congratulate you on your better health, and on the duke of Rutland's civilities to you. I am a little surprised at his brother, who is a seaman, having a propensity to divinity, and wonder you object to it; the church navigant would be an extension of its power. As to *orthodoxy*, excuse me, if I think it means nothing at all but every man's own opinion. Were every man to define his faith, I am persuaded that no two men are or ever were exactly of the same opinion in *all* points; and as men are more angry at others for differing with them on a single point, than

satisfied with their concurrence in all others, each would deem every body else a heretic. Old or new opinions are exactly of the same authority, for every opinion must have been new when first started; and no man has nor ever had more right than another to dictate, unless inspired. St. Peter and St. Paul disagreed from the earliest time, and who can be sure which was in the right? and if one of the apostles was in the wrong, who may not be mistaken? When you will tell me which was the orthodox, and which the heterodox apostle, I will allow that you know what orthodoxy is. You and I are perhaps the two persons who agree the best with very different ways of thinking.—and perhaps the reason is, that we have a mutual esteem for each other's sincerity, and from an experience of more than forty years, are persuaded that neither of us has any interested views. For my own part, I confess honestly that I am far from having the same charity for those whom I suspect of mercenary views. If Dr. Butler, when a private clergyman, wrote Whig pamphlets, and when bishop of Oxford preaches Tory sermons, I should not tell him that he does not know what orthodoxy is, but I am convinced he does not care what it is. The duke of Rutland seems much more liberal than Butler, or I, when he is so civil to you, though you voted against his brother. I am not acquainted with his grace, but I respect his behaviour; he is above prejudices.

The story of poor Mr. Cotton is shocking, whichever way it happened, but most probably it was accident.

I am ashamed at the price of my book, though not my fault, but I have so often been guilty myself of giving ridiculous prices for rarities, though of no intrinsic value, that I must not condemn the same folly in others. Every thing tells me how silly I am! I pretend to reason and yet am a virtuoso!—Why should I presume that at sixty-four I am too wise to marry?—and was you, who know so many of my weaknesses, in the wrong to suspect me of one more? Oh! no, my good friend: nor do I see any thing in your belief of it, but the kindness with which you wish me felicity on the occasion. I heartily thank you for it, and am

Most cordially yours.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 26, 1781.

I will not delay thanking you, dear sir, for a second letter, which you wrote out of kindness, though I have time but to say a word, having my house full of company. I think I have somewhere or other mentioned the *Robertus Comentarius* (probably on some former information from you, which you never forget to give me) at least the

name sounds familiar to me — but just now I cannot consult my papers or books from the impediment of my guests. As I am actually preparing a new edition of my Anecdotes, I shall very soon have occasion to search.

I am sorry to hear you complain of the gout, but trust it will be a short parenthesis.

Yours most gratefully.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 31, 1781.

YOUR lordship's too friendly partiality sees talents in me which I am sure I do not possess. With all my desire of amusing you, and with all my sense of gratitude for your long and unalterable goodness, it is quite impossible to send you an entertaining letter from hence. The insipidity of my life, that is passed with a few old people that are wearing out like myself, after surviving so many of my acquaintance, can furnish no matter of correspondence. What few novelties I hear, come stale, and not till they have been hashed in the newspapers; and though we are engaged in such big and wide wars, they produce no striking events, nor furnish any thing but regrets for the lives and millions we fling away to no purpose! One cannot divert when one can only compute; nor extract entertainment

from prophecies that there is no reason to colour favourably. We have indeed foretold success for seven years together, but debts and taxes have been the sole completion.

If one turns to private life, what is there to furnish pleasing topics? Dissipation without object, pleasure, or genius, is the only colour of the times. One hears every day of somebody undone, but can we or they tell how, except when it is by the most expeditious of all means, gaming? And now, even the loss of an hundred thousand pounds is not rare enough to be surprising. One may stare or growl, but cannot relate any thing that is worth hearing. I do not love to censure a younger age; but in good truth they neither amuse me nor enable me to amuse others.

The pleasantest event I know, happened to myself last Sunday morning, when general Conway, very unexpectedly, walked in as I was at breakfast, in his way to Park-place. He looks as well in health and spirits as ever I saw him; and though he staid but half an hour, I was perfectly content, as he is at home.

I am glad your lordship likes the fourth book of The Garden, which is admirably coloured. The version of Fresnoy I think the finest translation I ever saw. It is a most beautiful poem extracted from as dry and prosaic a parcel of verses as could be put together: Mr. Mason has gilded lead, and burnished it highly. Lord and lady Harcourt I

should think would make him a visit, and I hope for their sakes will visit Wentworth-castle. As they both have taste, I should be sorry they did not see the perfectest specimen of architecture I know.

Mrs. Damer certainly goes abroad this winter. I am glad of it for every reason but her absence. I am certain it will be essential to her health; and she has so eminently a classic genius, and is herself so superior an artist, that I enjoy the pleasure she will have in visiting Italy.

As your lordship has honoured all the productions of my press with your acceptance, I venture to enclose the last, which I printed to oblige the L * * * * s. There are many beautiful and poetic expressions in it. A wedding to be sure is neither a new nor a promising subject, nor will outlast the favours: still I think Mr. Jones's ode is uncommonly good for the occasion;[1] at least, if it does not much charm lady Strafford and your lordship, I know you will receive it kindly as a tribute from Strawberry-hill, as every homage is due to you both from its master.

Your devoted humble servant.

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[1] The marriage of lord Althorp with miss Bingham.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, September 16, 1781.

I am not surprised that such a mind as yours cannot help expressing gratitude: it would not be your mind, if it could command that sensation as triumphantly as it does your passions. Only remember that the expression is unnecessary. I do know that you feel the entire friendship I have for you; nor should I love you so well if I was not persuaded of it. There never was a grain of any thing romantic in my friendship for you. We loved one another from children, and as so near relations; but my friendship grew up with your virtues, which I admired though I did not imitate. We had scarce one in common but disinterestedness. Of the reverse we have both, I may say, been so absolutely clear, that there is nothing so natural and easy as the little moneyed transactions between us; and therefore knowing how perfectly indifferent I am upon that head, and remembering the papers I showed you, and what I said to you when I saw you last, I am sure you will have the complaisance never to mention thanks more.—Now to answer your questions.

As to coming to you, as that *feu gregeois* lord George Gordon has given up the election to my great joy, I can come to you on Sunday next. It is true, I had rather you visited your regiment

first, for this reason: I expect summons to Nuneham every day; and besides, having never loved two journeys instead of one, I grow more covetous of my time, as I have little left, and therefore had rather take Park-place, going and coming, on my way to lord Harcourt.

I don't know a word of news public or private. I am deep in my dear old friend's papers.[1] There are some very delectable; and though I believe, nay know, I have not quite all, there are many which I almost wonder, after the little delicacy they[2] have shown, ever arrived to my hands. I dare to say they will not be quite so just to the public; for though I consented that the correspondence with Voltaire should be given to the editors of his works, I am persuaded that there are many passages at least which they will suppress, as very contemptuous to his chief votaries — I mean of the votaries to his sentiments — for, like other heresiarchs, he despised his tools. If I live to see the edition, it will divert me to collate it with what I have in my hands.

You are the person in the world the fittest to encounter the meeting you mention for the choice of a bridge.[3] You have temper and patience

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1 Madame du Deffand, who died in September 1781, and left all her papers to Mr. Walpole.

2 The executors of madame du Deffand.

3 The bridge over the Thames at Henley.

enough to bear with fools and false taste. I, so unlike you, have learned some patience with both sorts too, but by a more summary method than by waiting to instil reason into them. Mine is only by leaving them to their own vagaries, and by despairing that sense and taste should ever extend themselves. Adieu!

P. S. In Voltaire's letters are some bitter traits on the king of Prussia, which, as he is defender of their no faith, I conclude will be *rayés* too.

TO MR. NICHOLS.[1]

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 31, 1781.

I AM glad to hear, sir, that your account of Hogarth[2] calls for another edition; and I am very sensible of your great civility in offering to change any passages that criticise my own work. Though I am much obliged by the offer, I should blush to myself if I even wished for that complaisance. Good God! sir, what am I, that I should be offended at or above criticism or correction? I do not know who ought to be—I am sure, no

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1 The well known bookseller and antiquary.

2 With which Mr. Nichols had presented Mr. Walpole.

author. I am a private man, of no consequence, and at best an author of very moderate abilities. In a work that comprehends so much biography as my Anecdotes of Painting, it would have been impossible, even with much more diligence than I employed, not to make numberless mistakes. It is kind to me to point out those errors; to the world it is justice. Nor have I reason to be displeased even with the manner. I do remember that in many passages you have been very civil to me. I do not recollect any harsh phrases. As my work is partly critical as well as biographic, there too I had no reason or right to expect deference to my opinions. Criticism, I doubt, has no very certain rule to go by; in matters of taste it is a still more vague and arbitrary science.

As I am very sincere, sir, in what I say, I will with the same integrity own, that in one or two places of your book I think the criticisms on me are not well founded. For instance; in p. 37. I am told that Hogarth did not deserve the compliment I pay him of not descending to the indelicacy of the Flemish and Dutch painters. It is very true that you have produced some instances, to which I had not adverted, where he has been guilty of the same fault, though I think not in all you alledge, nor to the degree alledged: in some I think the humour compensates for the indelicacy, which is never the case with the Dutch; and in one particular I think it is a merit; I mean

in the burlesque Paul before Felix; for there, sir, you should recollect that Hogarth himself meant to satirize, not to imitate the painters of Holland and Flanders.

You have also instanced, sir, many more portraits in his satiric prints than come within my defence of him, as not being a personal satirist; but in those too, with submission, I think you have gone too far; as, though you have cited portraits, are they all satiric? Sir John Gouson is the image of an active magistrate identified; but it is not ridiculous, unless to be an active magistrate is being ridiculous. Mr. Pine, I think you allow, desired to sit for the fat friar in the Gates of Calais — certainly not with a view to being turned into derision.

With regard to the bloody fingers of Sigismunda, you say, sir, that my memory must have failed me, as you affirm that they *are* unstained with blood. Forgive me if I say that I am positive they were so originally. I saw them so, and have often mentioned that fact. Recollect, sir, that you yourself allow, p. 46, in the note, that the picture was continually *altered, upon the criticism of one connoisseur or another.* May not my memory be more faithful about so striking a circumstance than the memory of another who would engage to recollect all the changes that remarkable picture underwent?

I should be very happy, sir, if I could contribute

any additional lights to your new publication; indeed, what additional lights I have gained are from your work, which has furnished me with many. I am going to publish a new edition of all the five volumes of my Anecdotes of Painting, in which I shall certainly insert what I have gathered from you. This edition will be in five thin octavos, without cuts, to make the purchase easy to artists and such as cannot afford the quartos, which are grown so extravagantly dear, that I am ashamed of it. Being published too at different periods, and being many of them cut to pieces for the heads, since the rage for portraits has been carried so far, it is very rare to meet with a complete set. My corrected copy is now in the printer's hands, except the last volume, in which are my additions to Hogarth from your list, and perhaps one or two more; but that volume also I have left in town, though not at the printer's, as, to complete it, I must wait for his new works, which Mrs. Hogarth is to publish.

When I am settled in town, sir, I shall be very ready, if you please to call on me in Berkeley-square, to communicate any additions I have made to my account of Hogarth. One or two trifles I have inserted in the margin of your account, which I will now mention, though scarcely worth your adopting.

P. 84 of yours. It is impossible Henry VIII. and Anna Boleyn could be meant for portraits of

the late prince and miss Vane. The stature and faces of both are totally unlike. You ask, sir, where the picture is or was? It was at Vauxhall, in the portico of the old great room on the right hand as you enter the garden. I remember it there.

P. 147, last line. There never was a *duke* of Kendal, but an infant son of James II. The arms engraved were certainly those of the *duchess* of Kendal, and the same with those I have in a lozenge. It must have been a mistake if written duke, or in a male shield.

P. 148. The print of Monticelli, Cuzzoni, and Heydeggre, if etched by him, was not designed by him, but the last countess of Burlington; nor is it Monticelli, but Farinelli: Monticelli was not in England till many years after the Cuzzoni.

I do not at present recollect any thing more that can be of use to you; and am,

Sir,

Your obliged and obedient humble servant.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, Sunday morning, Nov. 18, 1781.

I have been here again for three days, tending and nursing and waiting on Mr. Jephson's play. I have brought it into the world, was well delivered of it,

it can stand on its own legs—and I am going back to my own quiet hill, never likely to have any thing more to do with theatres. Indeed it has seemed strange to me, who for these three or four years have not been so many times in a play-house, nor knew six of the actors by sight, to be at two rehearsals, behind the scenes, in the green-room, and acquainted with half the company. The Count of Narbonne was played last night with great applause, and without a single murmur of disapprobation. Miss Young has charmed me. She played with intelligence that was quite surprising. The applause to one of her speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on. I am sure you will be pleased with the conduct and the easy beautiful language of the play, and struck with her acting.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 27, 1781.

EACH fresh mark of your lordship's kindness and friendship calls on me for thanks and an answer: every other reason would enjoin me silence. I not only grow so old, but the symptoms of age increase so fast, that, as they advise me to keep out of the world, that retirement makes me less fit to be informing or entertaining. The philosophers who

have sported on the verge of the tomb, or they who have *affected* to sport in the same situation, both tacitly implied that it was not out of their thoughts—and however dear what we are going to leave may be, all that is not particularly dear must cease to interest us much. If those reflections blend themselves with our gayest thoughts, must not their hue grow more dusty when public misfortunes and disgraces cast a general shade? The age, it is true, soon emerges out of every gloom, and wantons as before.—But does not that levity imprint a still deeper melancholy on those who do think? Have any of our calamities corrected us? Are we not revelling on the brink of the precipice? Does administration grow more sage, or desire that we should grow more sober? Are these themes for letters, my dear lord? Can one repeat common news with indifference, while our shame is writing for future history by the pens of all our numerous enemies? When did England see two whole armies lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners? Can venal addresses efface such stigmas, that will be recorded in every country in Europe? Or will such disgraces have no consequences? Is not America lost to us? Shall we offer up more human victims to the dæmon of obstinacy—and shall we tax ourselves deeper to furnish out the sacrifice? These are thoughts I cannot stifle at the moment that enforces them; and though I do not doubt but the same spirit of dissipation that

has swallowed up all our principles, will reign again in three days with its wonted sovereignty, I had rather be silent than vent my indignation.—Yet I cannot talk, for I cannot think, on any other subject. It was not six days ago, that in the height of four raging wars I saw in the papers an account of the opera and of the dresses of the company; and thence the town, and thence of course the whole nation, were informed that Mr. F * * * * * had very little powder in his hair. Would not one think that our newspapers were penned by boys just come from school for the information of their sisters and cousins? Had we had Gazettes and Morning Posts in those days, would they have been filled with such tittle-tattle after the battle of Agincourt, or in the more resembling weeks after the battle of Naseby? Did the French trifle equally even during the ridiculous war of the Fronde? If they were as impertinent then, at least they had wit in their levity. We are monkeys in conduct, and as clumsy as bears when we try to gambol. Oh! my lord! I have no patience with my country! and shall leave it without regret!—Can we be proud when all Europe scorns us? It was wont to envy us, sometimes to hate us, but never despised us before. James the first was contemptible, but he did not lose an America! His eldest grandson sold us, his younger lost us—but we kept ourselves. Now we have run to meet the ruin—and it is coming!

I beg your lordship's pardon, if I have said too much—but I do not believe I have. You have never sold yourself, and, therefore, have not been accessary to our destruction. You must be happy *now* not to have a son, who would live to grovel in the dregs of England. Your lordship has long been so wise as to secede from the follies of your countrymen. May you and lady Strafford long enjoy the tranquillity that has been your option even in better days!—and may you amuse yourself without giving loose to such reflections as have overflowed in this letter from

Your devoted humble servant.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 30, 1781.

We are both hearty friends, my dear sir, for I see we have both been reproaching ourselves with silence at the same moment. I am much concerned that you have had cause for yours. I have had less, though indisposed too in a part material for correspondence, my right hand, which has been in labour of chalk stones this whole summer, and at times so nervous as to tremble so much, that except when quite necessary, I have avoided a pen. I have been delivered of such a quantity of chalky matter, that I am not only almost free from pain,

but hope to avoid a fit this winter. How there can be a doubt what the gout is, amazes me! what is it but a concretion of humours, that either stop up the fine vessels, cause pain and inflammation, and pass away only by perspiration; or which discharge themselves into chalk stones, which sometimes remain in their beds, sometimes make their passage outwardly. I have experienced all three. It may be objected that the sometimes instantaneous removal of pain from one limb to another is too rapid for a current of chalk—true, but not for the humour before coagulated. As there is, evidently, too, a degree of wind mixed with the gout, may not that wind be impregnated with the noxious effluvia, especially as the latter are pent up in the body and may be corrupted?—I hope your present complaint in the foot will clear the rest of your person: many thanks for your etching of Mr. Browne Willis: I shall value it not only as I am a collector, but because he was your friend. What shall I say about Mr. Gough? he is not a pleasant man, and I doubt will teaze me about many things, some of which I never cared about, and all which I interest myself little about now, when I seek to pass my remnant in most indolent tranquillity. He has not been very civil to me, he worships the fools I despise, and I conceive has no genuine taste—yet as to trifling resentments, when the objects have not acted with bad hearts, I can most readily lose them. Please Mr. Gough,

I certainly shall not; I cannot be very grave about such idle studies as his and my own, and am apt to be impatient, or laugh when people imagine I am serious about them. But there is a stronger reason why I shall not satisfy Mr. Gough. He is a man to minute down whatever one tells him that he may call information, and whip it into his next publication. However, though I am naturally very frank, I can regulate myself by those I converse with; and as I shall be on my guard, I will not decline visiting Mr. Gough, as it would be illiberal or look surly if I refused. You shall have the merit, if you please, of my assent, and shall tell him, I shall be glad so see him any morning at eleven o'clock. This will save you the trouble of sending me his new work, as I conclude he will mention it to me.

I more willingly assure you that I shall like to see Mr. Stevens, and to show him Strawberry. You never sent me a person you commended, that I did not find deserved it.

You will be surprised when I tell you, that I have only dipped into Mr. Bryant's book, and lent the dean's before I had cut the leaves, though I had peeped into it enough to see that I shall not read it. Both he and Bryant are so diffuse on our antiquated literature, that I had rather believe in Rowley than go through their proofs. Mr. Warton and Mr. Tyrrwhit have more patience, and intend to answer them—and so the controversy

will be two hundred years out of my reach. Mr. Bryant, I did find, begged a vast many questions, which proved to me his own doubts. Dr. Glynn's foolish evidence made me laugh, and so did Mr. Bryant's sensibility *for me;* he says Chatterton treated me very *cruelly* in one of his writings. I am sure I did not feel it so. I suppose Bryant means under the title of baron of Otranto, which is written with humour. I must have been the sensitive plant if any thing in that character had hurt me! Mr. Bryant too, and the dean, as I see by extracts in the papers, have decorated Chatterton with sanctimonious honour—think of that young rascal's note, when summoning up his gains and losses by writing for and against Beckford, he says, "Am glad he is dead by *3l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*" *There* was a lad of too nice honour to be capable of forgery! and a lad, who, they do not deny, forged the poems in the style of Ossian, and fifty other things. In the parts I did read, Mr. Bryant, as I expected, reasons admirably, and staggered me; but when I took up the poems called Rowley's again, I protest I cannot see the smallest air of antiquity but the old words. The whole texture is conceived on ideas of the present century. The liberal manner of thinking of a monk so long before the Reformation is as stupendous—and where he met with Ovid's Metamorphoses, Eclogues, and plans of Greek tragedies, when even Caxton, a printer, took Virgil's Æneid for so rare

a novelty, are not less incomprehensible—though on these things I speak at random, nor have searched for the æra when the Greek and Latin classics came again to light—at present I imagine long after our Edward IV.

Another thing struck me in my very cursory perusal of Bryant. He asks where Chatterton could find so much knowledge of English events? I could tell him where he might, by a very natural hypothesis, though merely an hypothesis. It appears by the evidence, that Canninge left six chests of MSS. and that Chatterton got possession of some or several. Now what was therein *so probably* as a diary drawn up by Canninge himself or some churchwarden, or wardens, or by a monk, or monks? Is any thing more natural than for such a person, amidst the events at Bristol, to set down such other public facts as happened in the rest of the kingdom? Was not such almost all the materials of our ancient story? There is actually such an one, with some curious collateral facts, if I am not mistaken, for I write by memory, in the History of Furnese or Fountain's Abbey, I forget which—if Chatterton found such an one, did he want the extensive literature on which so much stress is laid? Hypothesis for hypothesis,—I am sure this is as rational an one, as the supposition, that six chests were filled with poems never else heard of.

These are my indigested thoughts on this mat-

ter—not that I ever intend to digest them—for I will not, at sixty-four, sail back into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and be drowned in an ocean of monkish writers of those ages or of this!

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 27, 1782.

For these three weeks I have had the gout in my left elbow and hand, and can yet but just bear to lay the latter on the paper while I write with the other. However, this is no complaint, for it is the shortest fit I have had these sixteen years, and with trifling pain; therefore, as the fits decrease, it does ample honour to my bootikens, regimen, and method. Next to my bootikens, I ascribe much credit to a diet drink of dock roots, of which Dr. Turton asked me for the receipt, as the best he had ever seen, and which I will send you if you please. It came from an old physician at Richmond, who did amazing service with it in inveterate scurvies, the parents, or ancestors at least, I believe, of all gouts. Your fit I hope is quite gone.

Mr. Gough has been with me.—I never saw a more dry, or more cold gentleman. He told me his new plan is a series of English monuments.

I do like the idea, and offered to lend him drawings for it.

I have seen Mr. Stevens too, who is much more flowing. I wish you had told me it was the editor of Shakspeare, for on his mentioning Dr. Farmer, I launched out and said, he was by much the most rational of Shakspeare's commentators, and had given the only sensible account of the authors our great poet had consulted. I really meant those who wrote before Dr. Farmer. Mr. Stevens seemed a little surprised, which made me discover the blunder I had made, for which I was very sorry, though I had meant nothing by it; however, do not mention it. I hope he has too much sense to take it ill, as he must have seen I had no intention of offending him; on the contrary, that my whole behaviour marked a desire of being civil to him as your friend, in which light only you had named him to me. Pray take no notice of it, though I could not help mentioning it, as it lies on my conscience to have been even undesignedly and indirectly unpolite to any body you recommend. I should not, I trust, have been so unintentionally to any body, nor with intention, unless provoked to it by great folly or dirtiness. Adieu!

My good sir,

Yours sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 14, 1782.

I have received such treasures from you, dear sir, through the channel of Mr. Nichols, that I neither know how to thank you, nor to find time to peruse them so fast as I am impatient to do. You must complete your kindness by letting me detain them a few days, till I have gone through them, when I will return them most carefully by the same intervention; and particularly the curious piece of enamel; for though you are, as usual, generous enough to offer it to me, I have plundered you too often already; and indeed I have room left for nothing more, nor have that miserly appetite of continuing to hoard what I cannot enjoy, nor have much time left to possess.

I have already looked into your beautiful illuminated MS. copied from Dr. Stukeley's letter, and with Anecdotes of the Antiquaries of Bennet College; and I have found therein so many charming instances of your candour, humility, and justice, that I grieve to deprive Mr. Gough for a minute even of the possession of so valuable a tract. I will not injure him or it, by begging you to cancel what relates to me, as it would rob you of part of your defence of Mr. Baker. If I wish to have it detained from Mr. Gough till the period affixed in the first leaf, or rather to my death, which will

probably precede yours, it is for this reason only; Mr. Gough is apt, as we antiquaries are, to be impatient to tell the world all he knows, which is unluckily much more than the world is at all impatient of knowing. For what you call *your flaming zeal,* I do not in the least object to it. We have agreed to tolerate each other, and certainly are neither of us infallible. I think, on what we differ most is, your calling *my* opinions *fashionable*—they were when we took them up: I doubt it is yours that are most in fashion now, at least in this country. The emperor seems to be of *our* party; but, if I like his notions, I do not admire his judgment, which is too precipitate to *be* judgment.

I smiled at Mr. Gough's idea of my declining his acquaintance as a member of that *obnoxious* society of antiquaries. It is their folly alone that is obnoxious to me—and can they help that? I shall very cheerfully assist him.

I am glad you are undeceived about the controversial piece in the Gentleman's Magazine, which I should have assured you, as you now know, that it was not mine. I declared, *in my Defence,* that I would publish nothing more about that question. I have not, nor intend it. Neither was it I that wrote the prologue to the Count of Narbonne, but Mr. Jephson himself. On the opposite page I will add the receipt for the diet drink: as to my regimen, I shall not specify it. Not only you would not adopt it, but I should

tremble to have you. In fact, I never do prescribe it, as I am persuaded it would kill the strongest man in England, who was not exactly of the same temperament with me, and who had not embraced it early. It consists in temperance to quantity as to eating—I do not mind the quality; but I am persuaded that great abstinence with the gout is dangerous; for, if one does not take nutriment enough, there cannot be strength sufficient to fling out the gout, and then it deviates to palsies. But my great nostrum is the use of cold water, inwardly and outwardly, on all occasions, and total disregard of precaution against catching cold. A hat you know I never wear, my breast I never button, nor wear great coats, &c. I have often had the gout in my face (as last week) and eyes, and instantly dip my head in a pail of cold water, which always cures it, and does not send it any where else. All this I dare do, because I have so for these forty years, weak as I look; but Milo would not have lived a week if he had played such pranks. My diet drink is not all of so Quixote a disposition; any of the faculty will tell you how innocent it is, at least. In a few days, for I am a rapid reader when I like my matter, I will return all your papers and letters; and in the mean time thank you most sincerely for the use of them, and am,

Your ever obliged.

P. S. My old friend, and your acquaintance, Dr. Dodd, died last Saturday—not of cold water. He and I were born on the very same day, but took to different elements. I doubt he had hurt his fortune as well as health.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

February 15, 1782.

I was so impatient to peruse all the literary stores you sent me, dear sir, that I stayed at home on purpose to give up a whole evening to them. I have gone through all; your own MS., which I envy Mr. Gough, his specimen, and the four letters to you from the latter and Mr. Stevens. I am glad they were both satisfied with my reception. In truth, you know I am neither formal nor austere, nor have any grave aversion to our antiquaries, though I do now and then divert myself with their solemnity about arrant trifles; yet perhaps we owe much to their thinking those trifles of importance, or the Lord knows how they would have patience to investigate them so indefatigably. Mr. Stevens seemed pleasant, but I doubt I shall never be demure enough to conciliate Mr. Gough. Then I have a wicked quality in an antiquary, nay, one that annihilates the essence: that is, I cannot bring myself to a habit of

minute accuracy about very indifferent prints. I do not doubt but there is a swarm of diminutive inaccuracies in my Anecdotes — well! if there is, I bequeath free leave of correction to the microscopic intellects of my continuators. I took dates and facts from the sedulous and faithful Vertue, and piqued myself on little but on giving an idea of the spirit of the times with regard to the arts at the different periods.

The specimen you present me of Mr. Gough's detail of our monuments is very differently treated, proves vast industry, and shows most circumstantial fidelity. It extends too, much farther than I expected, for it seems to embrace the whole mass of our monuments, nay, of some that are vanished. It is not what I thought, an intention of representing our modes of dress, from figures on monuments, but rather a history of our tombs. It is fortunate, though he may not think so, that so many of the more ancient are destroyed, since for three or four centuries they were clumsy, rude, and ugly. I know I am but a fragment of an antiquary, for I abhor all Saxon doings, and whatever did not exhibit some taste, grace, or elegance, and some ability in the artists. Nay, if I may say so to you, I do not care a straw for archbishops, bishops, mitred abbots, and cross-legged knights. When you have one of a sort you have seen all. However, to so superficial a *student in antiquity* as I am, Mr. Gough's work is not

unentertaining. It has frequently anecdotes and circumstances of kings, queens, and historic personages, that interest me, though I care not a straw about a series of bishops who had only Christian names, or were removed from one old church to a newer. Still I shall assist Mr. Gough with whatever he wants in my possession. I believe he is a very worthy man, and I should be a churl not to oblige any man who is so innocently employed. I have felt the selfish, the proud avarice of those who hoard literary curiosities for themselves alone, as other misers do money.

I observed in your account of the count, bishop Hervey, that you call one of his dedicators Martin Sherlock, *Esq.*, p. 53. That Mr. Sherlock is an Irish clergyman; I am acquainted with him. He is a very amiable good-natured man, and wants judgment, not parts. He is a little damaged by aiming at Sterne's capricious pertness, which the original wore out, and which, having been admired and cried up to the skies by foreign writers of reviews, was, on the contrary, too severely treated by our own. That injustice shocked Mr. Sherlock, who has a good heart and much simplicity, and sent him in dudgeon last year to Ireland; determined to write no more; yet I am persuaded he will, so strong is his propensity to being an author; and if he does, correction may make him more attentive to what he says and

writes. He has no gall; on the contrary, too much benevolence in his indiscriminate praise; but he has made many ingenious criticisms. He is a just, a due enthusiast to Shakspeare: but, alas! he scarce likes Richardson less. Pray would it be possible to get a print of Mr. Cowper by Mr. Tyson, mentioned in your MS., p. 45? Beware! do not plunge into your natural generosity, and say, "I have *one* at your service:" you have put me on my guard against your bountiful spirit. I vow solemnly I will not accept *an only one;* nor without that vow would I have named it.

There is another favour I am inclined to ask, but upon condition too that you refuse it if you have the least objection. I have a curiosity to see what the count bishop and Wilkes wrote in an Album you mention in p. 52. It is merely a curiosity to *see* them. I give you my honour I will return your transcript without transcribing it; yet, decline my request, if it is not agreeable to you.

The first minute I can spare a servant to send into the city, all your papers written and printed, and the enamel, shall be conveyed to Mr. Nichols; every thing but the two prints of Mr. Br. Willis, for which I thank you. Mr. Nichols has been with me himself—he is a very modest intelligent man.

Now, I have done with writing, and am pretty sick of the world and the great world, I have less

objection to amusing myself with writers. They divert me when I have nothing to read, especially as I have little else to do.

Adieu!

Yours most sincerely.

P. S. Saturday, 16th. The parcel for you will go this evening to Mr. Nichols, so you will inquire for it at the Rose next week.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

February 22, 1782.

I doubt you are again in error, my good sir, about the letter in the Gentleman's Magazine against the Rowleians, unless Mr. Malone sent it to you; for he is the author, and not Mr. Stevens, from whom I imagine you received it. There is a report that some part of Chatterton's forgery is to be produced by an accomplice—but this I do not answer for, nor know the circumstances. I have scarce seen a person who is not persuaded, that the *fashion* of the poems was Chatterton's own, though he might have found some old stuff to work upon, which very likely was the case; but now that the poems have been so much examined, nobody (that has an ear) can get over the modernity of the modulations, and the recent cast of the ideas and phra-

seology, corroborated by such palpable pillage of Pope and Dryden. Still the boy remains a prodigy by whatever means he procured or produced the edifice erected—and still it will be found inexplicable how he found time or materials for operating such miracles.

You are in another error about sir Harry Englefield, who cannot be going to marry a daughter of lord Cadogan, unless he has a natural one, of whom I never heard. Lord Cadogan has no daughter by his first wife, and his eldest girl by my niece is not five years old. The act of the emperor to which I alluded, is the general destruction of convents in Flanders, and, I suppose, in his German dominions too. The pope suppressed the carnival, as mourning, and proposes a journey to Vienna to implore mercy. This is a little different from the time when the pontiffs trampled on the necks of emperors, and called it trampling *super Aspidem et Draconem.* I hope you have received your cargo back undamaged. I was much obliged to you, and am,

Yours ever.

To the Hon. GEORGE HARDINGE.

March 8, 1782.

It is very pleasing to receive congratulation from a friend on a friend's success—that success, however, is not so agreeable as the universal esteem allowed to Mr. Conway's character, which not only accompanies his triumph, but I believe contributed to it. To-day, I suppose, all but his character will be reversed; for there must have been a miraculous change if the Philistines do not bear as ample a testimony to their Dagon's honour, as conviction does to that of a virtuous man. In truth, I am far from desiring that the opposition should prevail yet: the nation is not sufficiently changed, nor awakened enough, and it is sure of having its feelings repeatedly attacked by more woes; the blow will have more effect a little time hence; the clamour must be loud enough to drown the huzzas of five hoarse bodies, the Scotch, Tories, Clergy, Law, and Army, who would soon croak if new ministers cannot do what the old have made impossible; and therefore, till general distress involves all in complaint, and lays the cause undeniably at the right doors, victory will be but momentary, and the conquerors would soon be rendered more unpopular than the vanquished; for, depend upon it, the present ministers would not be as decent and as harmless an opposition as

the present. Their criminality must be legally proved and stigmatized, or the pageant itself would soon be restored to essence. Base money will pass till cried down. I wish you may keep your promise of calling upon me better than you have done. Remember, that though *you* have time enough before you, I have not; and, consequently, must be much more impatient for our meeting than you are, as I am, dear sir,

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 9, 1782.

Though I have scarce time, I must write a line to thank you for the print of Mr. Cowper, and to tell you how ashamed I am that you should have so much attention to me, on the slightest wish I express, when I fear my gratitude is not half so active, though it ought to exceed obligations.

Dr. Farmer has been with me, and though it was but a short visit, he pleased me so much by his easy simplicity and good sense, that I wish for more acquaintance with him.

I do not know whether the emperor will atone to you for demolishing the cross, by attacking the crescent. The papers say he has declared war with the Turks. He seems to me to be a

mountebank who professes curing all diseases. As power is his only panacea, the remedy methinks is worse than the disease. Whether Christianity will be laid aside I cannot say. As nothing of the spirit is left, the forms, I think, signify very little. Surely it is not an age of morality and principle; does it import whether profligacy is baptized or not? I look to motives, not to professions. I do not approve of convents: but, if Cæsar wants to make soldiers of monks, I detest his reformation, and think that men had better not procreate than commit murder; nay, I believe that monks get more children than soldiers do, but what avail abstracted speculations? Human passions wear the dresses of the times, and carry on the same views, though in different habits. Ambition and interest set up religions or pull them down, as fashion presents a handle; and the conscientious must be content, when the mode favours their wishes, or sigh when it does not.

Yours most sincerely.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

April 13, 1782.

Your partiality to me, my good sir, is much overseen, if you think me fit to correct your Latin. Alas! I have not skimmed ten pages of Latin

these dozen years. I have dealt in nothing but English, French, and a little Italian, and do not think, if my life depended on it, I could write four lines of pure Latin. I have had occasion once or twice to speak that language, and soon found that all my verbs were Italian with Roman terminations. I would not on any account draw you into a scrape, by depending on my skill in what I have half forgotten. But you are in the metropolis of Latium. If you distrust your own knowledge, which I do not, especially from the specimen you have sent me, surely you must have good critics at your elbow to consult.

In truth, I do not love Roman inscriptions in lieu of our own language, though, if any where, proper in an university — neither can I approve writing what the Romans themselves would not understand. What does it avail to give a Latin tail to a Guildhall? Though the word used by moderns, would *major* convey to Cicero the idea of a *mayor? Architectus*, I believe, is the right word; but I doubt whether *vetèris-jam perantiquæ* is classic for a dilapidated building — but do not depend on me; consult some better judges.

Though I am glad of the late *revolution*, a word for which I have great reverence, I shall certainly not dispute with you thereon. I abhor exultation. If the change produces peace, I shall make a bonfire in my heart. Personal interest I have none; you and I shall certainly never profit by the poli-

tics to which we are attached. The Archæologic epistle I admire exceedingly, though I am sorry it attacks Mr. Bryant, whom I love and respect. The dean is so absurd an oaf, that he deserves to be ridiculed. Is any thing more hyperbolic than his preferences of Rowley to Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton. Whether Rowley or Chatterton was the author, are the poems in any degree comparable to those authors? is not a ridiculous author an object of ridicule? I do not even guess at your meaning in your conclusive paragraph on that subject: Dictionary-writer I suppose alludes to Johnson: but surely you do not equal the compiler of a dictionary to a genuine poet? Is a brickmaker on a level with Mr. Essex? Nor can I hold that exquisite wit and satire are Billingsgate; if they were, Milles and Johnson would be able to write an answer to the epistle. I do as little guess whom you mean that got a pension by Toryism — if Johnson too; he got a pension for having abused pensioners, and yet took one himself, which was contemptible enough. Still less know I who preferred opposition to principles, which is not a very common case; whoever it was, as Pope says,

> The way he took was strangely round about.

With Mr. Chamberlayne I was very little acquainted, nor ever saw him six times in my life. It was with lord Walpole's branch he was intimate,

and to whose eldest son Mr. Chamberlayne had been tutor. This poor gentleman had a most excellent character universally, and has been more feelingly regretted than almost any man I ever knew. This is all I am able to tell you. I forgot to say, I am also in the dark as to the person you guess for the author of the epistle. It cannot be the same person to whom it is generally attributed, who certainly neither has a pension nor has deserted his principles, nor has reason to be jealous of those he laughed at; for their abilities are far below his. I do not mean that it is his, but is attributed to him. It was sent to me, nor did I ever see a line of it till I read it in print. In one respect it is most credible to be his, for there are not two such inimitable poets in England. I smiled on reading it, and said to myself, "Dr. Glynn is well off to have escaped!" His language indeed about me has been Billingsgate; but peace be to his and the manes of Rowley, if they have ghosts who never existed. The epistle has not put an end to that controversy, which was grown so tiresome. I rejoice at having kept my resolution of not writing a word more on that subject: The dean had swollen it to an enormous bladder; the archæologic poet pricked it with a pin; a sharp one indeed, and it burst. Pray send me a better account of yourself if you can.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE HON. GEORGE HARDINGE.

Berkeley-square, April 18, 1782.

I HAVE great pleasure, dear sir, in your preferment, and sincerely wish you joy. I have no doubt but your abilities will continue my satisfaction as long as I can be witness to their success. I did not expect to live to see the door opened to constitutional principles. That they have recovered their energy, is a proof of their excellence; and I hope that, as they have surmounted their enemies, they will not be ever betrayed by their friends.

Yours heartily.

TO THE HON. GEORGE HARDINGE.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE had a calf born, but it was ugly and from a *mésalliance*. But I have had two more cows whose times are out, and you shall know as soon as they are delivered. When I received your note, I concluded it was to tell me of lady D * * * * *'s message. She told me she would ask you to-morrow evening; and she desired I would meet you. I shall not tell *you* what she said of you.

I have just seen the balloon too, and all the idea it gave me was one I have not had since I was at school—*football*.

My gout, thank you, is dormant; the rest, such rest as there is, gives me no trouble.

I send you a new Strawberry edition, which you will find extraordinary, not only as a most accurate translation, but as a piece of genuine French not metaphysicked by la Harpe, by Thomas, &c. and with versions even of Milton into *poetry*, though in the *French* language. The duc has had 100 copies, and I myself as many for presents: none will be sold, so their imaginary value will rise.

I have seen over and over again Mr. Barrett's plans, and approve them exceedingly. The Gothic parts are classic; you must consider the whole as Gothic modernized in parts — not as what it is — the reverse. Mr. Wyatt, if more employed in that style, will show as much taste and imagination as he does in Grecian. I shall visit *Lee* next summer.

I remain yours ever.

To Mr. NICHOLS.

April, 1782.

As it is said to be so much desired, the author consents to let the whole of the Letter on Chatterton be printed in the Gentleman's Magazine; but not in a separate pamphlet.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 14, 1782.

I am very sorry for the shock you have had, in the loss of your niece, dear sir; and so I am for my old friend Dr. Apthorpe. I would say more, but as I am confined with an uncommon complaint for me, a violent cold, cough, and tightness on my breast, for which I have been blooded two days together, with all possible success; yet as my arm is bound up, it is rather awkward to write — however, I could not help telling you, I partake of whatever affects you, nor defer complying with your request. I prefer sending a card, lest Margaret, who is no scholar but by rote, should make any mistake in giving her verbal or written orders —to which she is less accustomed than to cards.

I hope you will soon recover your indisposition and flurry; and am

Ever yours.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 24, 1782.

You are always kind to me, dear sir, in all respects, but I have been forced to recur to a rougher prescription than ass's milk. The pain

and oppression on my breast obliged me to be blooded two days together, which removed my cold and fever; but, as I foresaw, left me the gout in their room. I have had it in my left foot and hand for a week, but it is going. This cold is very epidemic. I have at least half a dozen nieces and great nieces confined with it, but it is not dangerous or lasting. I shall send you, within this day or two, the new edition of my Anecdotes of Painting; you will find very little new; it is a cheap edition for the use of artists, and that at least they who really want the book, and not the curiosity, may have it, without being forced to give the outrageous price at which the Strawberry edition sells, merely because it is rare.

I could assure Mr. Gough, that the letter on Chatterton cost me very small pains. I had nothing to do but recollect and relate the exact truth. There has been published another piece on it, which I cannot tell whether meant to praise or blame me; so wretchedly is it written; and I have received another anonymous one, dated Oxford, (which may be to disguise Cambridge) and which professes to treat me very severely, though stuffed with fulsome compliments. It abuses me for speaking modestly of myself—a fault I hope I shall never mend; avows agreeing with me on the supposition of the poems, which may be a lie, for it is not uncharitable to conclude that an anonymous writer is a liar; acquits me of being at all

accessory to the poor lad's catastrophe; and then, with most sensitive nerves, is shocked to death, and finds me guilty of it, for having, after it happened, dropped, that had he lived he might have fallen into more serious forgeries, though I declare that I never heard that he did. To be sure, no Irishman ever blundered more, than to accuse one of an *ex post facto* murder! If this Hibernian casuist is smitten enough with his own miscarriage to preserve it in a magazine phial, I shall certainly not answer it, not even by this couplet which is suggested:

So fulsome, yet so captious too, to tell you much it grieves me,
That though your flattery makes me sick, your peevishness relieves me.

Adieu, my good sir—pray inquire for your books, if you do not receive them. They go by the Cambridge Fly.

Yours ever.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, June 1, 1782.

I THANK you much, dear sir, for your kind intention about Elizabeth of York; but it would be gluttony and rapacity to accept her; I have her already in the picture of her marriage, which was lady Pomfret's; besides Vertue's print of her with

her husband, son, and daughter-in law. In truth I have not room for any more pictures any where; yet, without plundering you, or without impoverishing myself, I have supernumerary pictures with which I can furnish your vacancies; but I must get well first to look them out: as yet I cannot walk alone; and my posture, as you see, makes me write ill. It is impossible to recover in such weather — never was such a sickly time.

I have not yet seen bishop Newton's Life. I will not give three guineas for what I would not give three-pence, his Works; his Life, I conclude, will be borrowed by all the magazines, and there I shall see it.

I know nothing of *Acciliator*—I have forgotten some of my good Latin, and luckily never knew any bad; having always detested monkish barbarism. I have just finished Mr. Pennant's new volume; parts of which amused me, though I knew every syllable that was worth knowing before, for there is not a word of novelty; and it is tiresome his giving such long extracts out of Dugdale and other common books, and telling one long stories about all the most celebrated characters in the English history, besides panegyrics on all who showed him their houses: but the prints are charming — though I cannot conceive why he gave one of the countess of Cumberland, who never did any thing worth memory, but recording the very night on which she conceived.

The Fair Circassian was written by a Mr. Pratt, who has published several works under the name of Courtney Melmoth. The play might have been written by Cumberland — it is bad enough. I did read the latter's coxcombical anecdotes, but saw nothing on myself, except mention of my Painters. Pray what is the passage you mean on me or Vertue? Do not write on purpose to answer this — it is not worth while.

I have just bought a most curious old picture, a portrait of one of whom I never saw a head—it is Robert Vere, duke of Ireland, the great favourite of Richard II. It is evidently very ancient, being only part of a larger piece on board. Behind the head is this remnant of an inscription, which, being defective, and thence unintelligible, shows it is not an imposition — I mean not a modern cheat; though, perhaps, not a genuine portrait; here is what remains —

R*obert*	The syllables under	Robertus Verus
Dux	which I have drawn	Dux Hiberniæ
Dub*lin*	a line are evidently	Dubliniæ Marchio
Oxon.	more recent, not on	Oxoniæ Comes
Baron	the same piece of	Baro ——
Rari	board. I imagine	
Bula	the part wanting	
Nebo	might be, as I have	
Ob. 1393.	supplied it, on the	
	right hand,	

but I can make nothing of the three last pieces of words, which might be parts of Irish baronies. Will you be so good as to look into Collins's house of Vere, or Dugdale, &c. for I have no book in town. Let this too be at your leisure; for I am in no hurry, except to hear that you are better. Adieu.

TO MR. NICHOLS.

Berkeley-square, June 19, 1782.

SIR,

JUST this moment, on opening your fifth volume of Miscellaneous Poems, I find the Translation of Cato's Speech into Latin, attributed (by common fame) to bishop Atterbury. I can most positively assure you, that that Translation was the work of DR. Henry Bland, afterwards head-master of Eton-school, provost of the College there, and dean of Durham. I have more than once heard my father sir Robert Walpole say, that it was he himself who gave that Translation to Mr. Addison, who was extremely surprised at the fidelity and beauty of it. It may be worth while, sir, on some future occasion, to mention this fact in some one of your valuable and curious publications.

I am, sir, with great regard,

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Berkeley-square, June 21, 1782.

It is no trouble, my good sir, to write to you, for I am as well recovered as I generally do. I am very sorry you do not, and especially in your hands, as your pleasure and comfort so much depend on them. Age is by no means a burden while it does not subject one to depend on others; when it does, it reconciles one to quitting every thing — at least I believe you and I think so, who do not look on solitude as a calamity. I shall go to Strawberry to-morrow, and will, as I might have thought of doing, consult Dugdale and Collins for the duke of Ireland's inferior titles. Mr. Gough I shall be glad of seeing, when I am settled there, which will not be this fortnight.

I think there are but eleven parts of Marianne, and that it breaks off in the nun's story, which promised to be very interesting. Marivaux never finished Marianne, nor the Paysan Parvenu (which was the case too with the younger Crebillon with Les Egaremens). I have seen two bad conclusions of Marianne by other hands.

Elizabeth of York I beg you will keep—I really have not a place for it; but I shall send you by Monday's Fly, four very indifferent pictures, which will not deserve the smallest thanks: I shall be content if one of them will serve to fill your va-

cancy, and if the others will be of any use to you. If they are not, I assure you they are not worth returning, though I bought them all at Mr. Sheldon's in lots with other articles: one is a portrait of Selden; the three others are an altar-piece with doors and arms, which, by the flourishing sort of mantle round them, seem to be Flemish or Dutch. Mr. Cumberland's *brusquerie* is not worth notice, nor did I remember it. Mr. Pennant's impetuosity you must overlook too, though I love your delicacy about your friend's memory. Nobody that knows you will suspect you of wanting it; but, in the ocean of books that overflows every day, who will recollect a thousandth part of what is in most of them? By the number of writers one should naturally suppose there were multitudes of readers; but if there are, which I doubt, the latter only read the productions of the day. Indeed, if they did read former publications, they would have no occasion to read the modern, which, like Mr. Pennant's, are borrowed wholesale from the more ancient: it is sad to say, that the borrowers add little new but mistakes. I have just been turning over Mr. Nichols's eight volumes of Select Poems, which he has swelled unreasonably with large collops of old authors, most of whom little deserved revivifying. I bought them for the biographical notes, in which I have found both inaccuracies and blunders. For instance, one that made me laugh. In lord Lansdown's Beauties he

celebrates a lady, or Mrs. Vaughan. Mr. Nichols turns to the peerage of that time, and finds a duke of Bolton married a lady Ann Vaughan; he instantly sets her down for the lady in question, and introduces her to posterity as a beauty. Unluckily she was a monster—so ugly, that the duke, then marquis of Winchester, being forced by his father to marry her for her great fortune, was believed never to have consummated, and parted from her as soon as his father died; but, if our predecessors are exposed to these misrepresentations, what shall we be, when not only all private history is detailed in the newspapers, but scarce ever with tolerable fidelity! I have long said, that if a paragraph in a newspaper contains a word of truth, it is sure to be accompanied with two or three blunders — yet who will believe that papers published in the face of the whole town, should be nothing but magazines of lies, every one of which fifty persons could contradict and disprove? Yet so it certainly is, and future history will probably be ten times falser than all preceding. Adieu.

Yours most sincerely.

To Mr. NICHOLS.

June 30.

Mr. Walpole is much obliged to Mr. Nichols for the prints, and will beg another of Mr. Bowyer for his Collection of Heads, as he shall put the one he has received to Mr. Bowyer's Life. Mr. Walpole has no objection to being named for the anecdote of Dr. Bland's Translation, as it is right to authenticate it.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 23, 1782.

I have been more dilatory than usual, dear sir, in replying to your last; but it called for no particular answer, nor have I now any thing worth telling you. Mr. Gough and Mr. Nichols dined with me on Saturday last. I lent the former three-and-twenty drawings of monuments out of Mr. Lethuillier's books, for his large work, which will be a magnificent one. Mr. Nichols is, as you say, a very rapid editor, and I must commend him for being a very accurate one. I scarce ever saw a book so correct as his Life of Mr. Bowyer. I wish it deserved the pains he has bestowed on it every way, and that he would not dub so many men

great. I have known several of his *heroes*, who were very *little* men. Dr. Meade had nothing but pretensions, and Philip Carteret Webbe was a sorry knave, with still less foundation. To what a slender total do those shrink who are the idols of their own age! How very few are known at all at the end of the next century! But there is a chapter in Voltaire that would cure anybody of being a great man even in his own eyes. It is a chapter in which a Chinese goes into a book-seller's shop, and marvels at not finding any of his own country's classics. It is a chapter that ought never to be out of the sight of any vain author. I have just got the catalogue of the MSS. in the Museum. It is every way piteously dear — the method is extremely puzzling, and the contents chiefly rubbish: who would give a rush for Dr. Birch's correspondence? many of the pieces are in print. In truth, I set little store by a collection of MSS. A work must be of little value that never could get into print; I mean, if it has existed half a century. The articles that diverted me most were an absolute novelty; I knew Henry VIII. was a royal author, but not a royal quack. There are several receipts of his own, and this delectable one amongst others. "The king's grace's oyntement made at St. James's, to coole, and dry, and comfort the ——." Another, to the same purpose, was devised at *Cawcode* — was not that an episcopal palace? how devoutly was the

head of the church employed! I hope that you have recovered your spirits, and that summer, which is arrived at last, will make a great amendment in you.

Yours most sincerely.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, August 16, 1782.

If this letter reaches your lordship, I believe it must be conveyed by a dove; for we are all under water, and a postman has not where to set the sole of his foot. They tell me, that in the north you have not been so drowned, which will be very fortunate; for in these parts every thing is to be apprehended for the corn, the sheep, and the camps—but, in truth, all kinds of prospects are most gloomy, and even in lesser lights uncomfortable. Here we cannot stir, but armed for battle. Mr. Potts, who lives at Mr. Hindley's, was attacked and robbed last week at the end of Gunnersbury-lane, by five footpads who had two blunderbusses. Lady Browne and I do continue going to Twickenham-park; but I don't know how long it will be prudent, nor whether it is so now.

I have not been at Park-place, for Mr. Conway is never there, at least only for a night or two. His regiment was reviewed yesterday at Ashford.

common, but I did not go to see it.—In truth, I have so little taste for common sights, that I never did see a review in my life. I was in town last week, yet saw not monsieur de Grasse; nor have seen the giant or the dwarf.

Poor Mrs. Clive is certainly very declining, but has been better of late, and which I am glad of, thinks herself better. All visions that comfort one are desirable—the conditions of mortality do not bear being pryed into; nor am I an admirer of that philosophy that scrutinizes into them: the philosophy of deceiving one's self is vastly preferable. What signifies anticipating what we cannot prevent?

I do not pretend to send your lordship any news, for I do not know a tittle, nor inquire. Peace is the sole event of which I wish to hear. For private news, I have outlived almost all the world with which I was acquainted, and have no curiosity about the next generation, scarce more than about the 20th century. I wish I was less indifferent for the sake of the few with whom I correspond, your lordship in particular, who are always so good and partial to me, and on whom I should indubitably wait, were I fit to take a long journey; but as I walk no better than a tortoise, I make a conscience of not incommodating my friends, whom I should only confine at home. Indeed both my feet and hands are so lame, that I now scarce ever dine abroad. Being so antiquated and

insipid, I will release your lordship, and am, with my unalterable respects to lady Strafford,

Your lordship's most devoted humble servant.

To Mr. NICHOLS.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 18, 1782.

Mr. Walpole is extremely obliged to Mr. Nichols for the books and prints; and begs, when he sees Mr. Gough, to thank him for his obliging present of Mr. Brown's tract.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 17, 1782.

I had not time yesterday to say what I had to say about your coming hither. I should certainly be happy to see you and lady Ailesbury at any time; but it would be unconscionable to expect it when you have scarce a whole day in a month to pass at your own house, and to look after your own works. Friends, I know, lay as great stress upon trifles as upon serious points; but as there never was a more sincere attachment than mine, so it is the most reasonable one too, for I always think for you more than myself. Do whatever you

have to do, and be assured, that is what I like best that you should do. The present hurry cannot last always. Your present object is to show how much more fit you are for your post[1] than any other man; by which you will do infinite service too, and will throw a great many private acts of good-nature and justice into the account. Do you think I would stand in the way of any of these things? and that I am not aware of them? Do you think about me? If it suits you at any moment, come. Except Sunday next, when I am engaged to dine abroad, I have nothing to do till the middle of October, when I shall go to Nuneham; and, going or coming, may possibly catch you at Park-place.

I am not quite credulous about your turning smoke into gold[2]: it is perhaps because I am ignorant. I like Mr. M*** extremely; and though I have lived so long that I have little confidence, I think you could not have chosen one more likely to be faithful. I am sensible that my kind of distrust would prevent all great enterprises—and yet I cannot but fear, that unless one gives one's self up entirely to the pursuit of a new object, this risk must be doubled. But I will say

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1 Mr. Conway was now commander-in-chief.

2 Alluding to the coke-ovens, for which Mr. Conway afterwards obtained a patent.

no more; for I do not even wish to dissuade you, as I am sure I understand nothing of the matter, and therefore mean no more than to keep your discretion awake.

The tempest of Monday night alarmed me too for the fleet: and as I have nothing to do but to care, I feel for individuals as well as for the public, and think of all those who may be lost, and of all those who may be made miserable by such loss. Indeed, I care most for individuals—for as to the public, it seems to be totally insensible to every thing!

I know nothing worth repeating; and having now answered all your letter, shall bid you good night.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, October 3, 1782.

I did think it long since I had the honour of hearing from your lordship; but conscious how little I could repay you with any entertainment, I waited with patience. In fact I believe, summer-correspondences often turn on complaints of want of news. It is unlucky that that is generally the season of correspondence as it is of separation. People assembled in a capital contrive to furnish matter, but then they have not occasion to write

it. Summer being the season of campaigns ought to be more fertile—I am glad when that is not the case, for what is an account of a battle but a list of burials? Vultures and birds of prey might write with pleasure to their correspondents in the Alps of such events—but they ought to be melancholy topics to those who have no beaks or talons. At this moment if I was an epicure among the sharks, I should rejoice that general Elliot has just sent the carcases of 1500 Spaniards down to market under Gibraltar—but I am more pleased that he dispatched boats and saved some of those whom he had overset. What must a man of so much feeling have suffered at being forced to do his duty so well as he has done! I remember hearing such another humane being, that brave old admiral sir Charles Wager, say, that in his life he had never killed a fly.

This demolition of the Spanish armada is a great event—a very good one if it prevents a battle between lord Howe and the combined fleets, as I should hope; and yet better if it produces peace; the only political crisis to which I look with eagerness. Were that happy moment arrived, there is ample matter to employ our great men, if we have any, in retrieving the affairs of this country, if they are to be retrieved.—But though our sedentary politicians write abundance of letters in the newspapers, full of plans of public spirit, I doubt the

nation is not sober enough to set about its own work in earnest. When none reform themselves, little good is to be expected. We see by the excess of highwaymen how far evils will go before any attempt is made to cure them. I am sure, from the magnitude of this inconvenience, that I am not talking merely like an old man. I have lived here above thirty years, and used to go every where round at all hours of the night without any precaution. I cannot now stir a mile from my own house after sun-set without one or two servants with blunderbusses. I am not surprised your lordship's pheasants were stolen: a woman was taken last Saturday night loaded with nine geese, and they say has impeached a gang of fourteen housebreakers—but these are under graduates—when they should have taken their doctor's degrees, they would not have piddled in such little game. Those regius-professors the nabobs have taught men not to plunder for farthings.

I am very sensible of your lordship's kindness to my nephew Mr. C * * *. He is a sensible, well-behaved young man, and, I trust, would not have abused your goodness.

Mr. Mason writes to me, that he shall be at York at the end of this month. I was to have gone to Nuneham; but the house is so little advanced, that it is a question whether they can receive me. Mason, I doubt, has been idle there. I am sure,

if he found no muses there, he could pick up none at Oxford, where there is not so much as a bed-maker that ever lived in a muse's family.

Tonton begs his duty to all the lambs, and trusts that lady Strafford will not reject his homage.

I am ever her ladyship's and your lordship's

Most devoted humble servant.

To the Rev. Mr. COLE.[1]

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 5, 1782.

I had begun a letter in answer to another person, which I have broken off on receiving yours, dear sir. I am exceedingly concerned at the bad account you give of yourself; and yet, on weighing it, I flatter myself that you are not only out of all danger, but have had a fortunate crisis, which I hope will prolong your life. A bile surmounted is a present from nature to us, who are not boys: and though you speak as weary of life from sufferings, and yet with proper resignation and philosophy, it does not frighten me, as I know that any humour and gathering, even in the gum, is strangely dispiriting.

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[1] Mr. Cole died within six weeks of the date of this letter, on the 16th of December, 1782.

I do not write merely from sympathising friendship, but to beg that if your bile is not closed or healing, you will let me know, for the bark is essential, yet very difficult to have genuine. My apothecary here, I believe, has some very good, and I will send you some directly.

I will thank you, but not trouble you with an account of myself. I had no fit of the gout, nor any new complaint; but it is with the utmost difficulty I keep the humour from laming me entirely, especially in my hands, which are a mine of chalk stones; but, as they discharge themselves, I flatter myself they prevent heavier attacks.

I do take in the European Magazine, and think it in general one of the best. I forgot what was said of me—sometimes I am corrected, sometimes flattered, and care for neither. I have not seen the answer to Mr. Warton, but will send for it.

I shall not be sorry on my own account if Dr. Lort quits Lambeth, and comes to Saville-row, which is in my neighbourhood—but I did not think a wife was the stall where he would set up his staff.

You have given me the only reason why I cannot be quite sorry that you do not print what you had prepared for the press. No kind intention towards me from you surprises me—but then I want no new proofs. My wish, for whatever shall be the remainder of my life, is to be quiet and forgotten. Were my course to recommence, and

could think in youth as one does at sixty-five, I have no notion I should have courage to appear as an author. Do you know, too, that I look on fame now as the idlest of all visions? but this theme would lead me too far.

I collect a new comfort from your letter. The *writing* is much better than in most of your latest letters. If your pain were not ceased, you could not have formed your letters so firmly and distinctly. I will not say more, lest I should draw you into greater fatigue; let me have but a single line in answer.

Yours most cordially.

TO THE HON. GEORGE HARDINGE.

Berkeley-square, May 17, 1783.

THOUGH I shall not be fixed at Strawberry on this day fortnight, I will accept your offer, dear sir, because my time is more at my disposal than yours, and you may not have any other day to bestow upon me later. I thank you for your second, which I shall read as carefully as I did the former. It is not your fault if you have not yet made sir * * * white as driven snow to me. Nature has providentially given us a powerful antidote to eloquence, or the criminal that has the best advocate would escape. But, when rhe-

toric and logic stagger my lords the judges, in steps prejudice, and, without one argument that will make a syllogism, confutes Messrs. Demosthenes, Tully, and Hardinge, and makes their lordships see as clearly as any old woman in England, that *belief* is a much better rule of *faith* than *demonstration.* This is just my case: I do believe, nay, and I will believe, that no man ever went to India with honest intentions. If he returns with 100,000*l.* it is plain that I was in the right. But I have still a stronger proof—my lord Coke says, "Set a thief to catch a thief;" my lord A * * * says, "Sir * * * is a rogue:" *ergo*——I cannot give so complete an answer to the rest of your note, as I trust I have done to your pleadings, because the latter is in print, and your note is MS. Now unfortunately, I cannot read half of it; for, give me leave to say, that either your hand or my spectacles are so bad, that I generally guess at your meaning rather than decipher it, and this time the context has not served me well. You shall comment on it when I see you; till when, I am, as usually,

Much yours.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 24, 1783.

Though your lordship's partiality extends even to my letters, you must perceive that they grow as antiquated as the writer. News are the soul of letters: when we give them a body of our own invention, it is as unlike to life as a statue. I have withdrawn so much from the world, that the newspapers know every thing before me, especially since they have usurped the province of telling every thing, private as well as public; and consequently a great deal more than I should wish to know, or like to report. When I do hear the transactions of much younger people, they do not pass from my ears into my memory; nor does your lordship interest yourself more about them than I do. Yet still, when one reduces one's department to such narrow limits, one's correspondence suffers by it. However, as I desire to show only my gratitude and attachment, not my wit, I shall certainly obey your lordship as long as you are content to read my letters, after I have told you fairly how little they can entertain you.

For imports of French, I believe we shall have few more. They have not ruined us so totally by the war, much less enriched themselves so much by it, but that they who have been here, complained so piteously of the expensiveness of England, that

probably they will deter others from a similar jaunt—nor, such is their fickleness, are the French constant to any thing but admiration of themselves. Their Anglomanie I hear has mounted—or descended—from our customs to our persons. English people are in fashion at Versailles. A Mr. * * * *, who wrote some pretty verses at Bath two or three years ago, is a favourite there. One who was so, or may be still, the *beau Dillon*, came upon a very different errand—in short, to purchase at any price a book written by Linguet, which was just coming out, called *Antoinette*. That will tell your lordship why the *beau Dillon* was the messenger.

Monsieur de Guignes and his daughters came hither—but it was at eight o'clock at night in the height of the deluge. You may be sure I was much flattered by such a visit! I was forced to light candles to show them any thing; and must have lighted the moon to show them the views. If this is their way of seeing England, they might as well look at it with an opera-glass from the shore of Calais.

Mr. Mason is to come to me on Sunday, and will find me mighty busy in making my lock of hay, which is not yet cut. I don't know why, but people are always more anxious about their hay than their corn, or twenty other things that cost them more. I suppose my lord Chesterfield, or some such dictator, made it fashionable to care

about one's hay.—Nobody betrays solicitude about getting in his rents.

We have exchanged spring and summer for autumn and winter, as well as day for night. If religion or law enjoined people to love light, and prospects, and verdure, I should not wonder if perverseness made us hate them—no, nor if society made us prefer living always in town to solitude and beauty. But that is not the case. The most fashionable hurry into the country at Christmas and Easter, let the weather be ever so bad—and the finest ladies, who will go no whither till eleven at night, certainly pass more tiresome hours in London alone than they would in the country. But all this is no business of mine: they do what they like, and so do I; and I am exceedingly tolerant about people who are perfectly indifferent to me. The sun and the seasons were not gone out of fashion when I was young—and I may do what I will with them now I am old: for fashion is fortunately no law but to its devotees. Were I five-and-twenty, I dare to say I should think every whim of my contemporaries very wise, as I did then. In one light I am always on the side of the young; for they only silently despise those who do not conform to their ordonnances; but age is very apt to be angry at the change of customs, and partial to others no better founded. It is happy when we are occupied by nothing more serious. It is happy for a nation when mere

fashions are a topic that can employ its attention; for though dissipation may lead to graver moments, it commences with ease and tranquillity; and they at least who live before the scene shifts are fortunate, considering and comparing themselves with the various regions who enjoy no parallel felicity. I confess my reflections are *couleur de rose* at present. I did not much expect to live to see peace, without far more extensive ruin than has fallen on us. I will not probe futurity in search of less agreeable conjectures. Prognosticators may see many seeds of dusky hue—but I am too old to look forwards. Without any omens, common sense tells one, that in the revolution of ages nations must have unprosperous periods. But why should I torment myself for what may happen in twenty years after my death, more than for what may happen in two hundred? Nor shall I be more interested in the one than in the other. This is no indifference for my country: I wish it could always be happy—but so I do to all other countries. Yet who could ever pass a tranquil moment, if such future speculations vexed him?

Adieu, my good lord!—I doubt this letter has more marks of senility than the one I announced at the beginning. When I had no news to send you, it was no reason for tiring you with common places. But your lordship's indulgence spoils me. Does not it look as if I thought, that, because

you commend my letters, you would like whatever I say? Will not lady Strafford think that I abuse your patience? — I ask both your pardons — and am to both

A most devoted humble servant.

To Mr. GOUGH.

Strawberry-hill, July 5, 1783.

Mr. Walpole is extremely obliged to Mr. Gough for his magnificent present, and very glad to have had an opportunity of contributing to so beautiful and valuable a work. Mr. Walpole should have thanked Mr. Gough sooner; but he did not know how to direct till he had sent to Mr. Nichols.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 1, 1783.

It would be great happiness indeed to me, my dear lord, if such nothings as my letters could contribute to any part of your lordship's; but as your own partiality bestows their chief merit on them, you see they owe more to your friendship than to the writer. It is not my interest to depreciate them; much less to undermine the foundation of their

sole worth. Yet it would be dishonest not to warn your lordship, that if my letters have had any intrinsic recommendation, they must lose of it every day. Years and frequent returns of gout have made a ruin of me. Dullness, in the form of indolence, grows upon me. I am inactive, lifeless, and so indifferent to most things, that I neither inquire after nor remember any topics that might enliven my letters. Nothing is so insipid as my way of passing my time. But I need not specify what my letters speak. — They can have no spirit left — and would be perfectly inanimate, if attachment and gratitude to your lordship were as liable to be extinguished by old age as our more amusing qualities. I make no new connections; but cherish those that remain with all the warmth of youth and the piety of gray hairs.

The weather here has been, and is, with very few intervals, sultry to this moment. I think it has been of service to me; though by overheating myself I had a few days of lameness. The harvest is half over already all round us, and so pure, that not a poppy or cornflower is to be seen. Every field seems to have been weeded like B * * * * *'s bowling-green. If Ceres, who is at least as old as many of our fashionable ladies, loves tricking herself out in flowers as they do, she must be mortified; and with more reason; for she looks well always with top-knots of ultramarine and vermilion,

which modern goddesses do not for half so long as they think they do. As Providence showers so many blessings on us, I wish the peace may confirm them! Necessary I am sure it was — and when it cannot restore us, where should we have been had the war continued? Of our situation and prospect I confess my opinion is melancholy—not from present politics but from past. We flung away the most brilliant position — I doubt, for a long season! With politics I have totally done. I wish the present ministers may last; for I think better of their principles than of those of their opponents (with a few salvos on both sides), and so I do of their abilities. — But it would be folly in me to concern myself about new generations.— How little a way can I see of their progress!

I am rather surprised at the new countess of * * * * *. How could a woman be ambitious of resembling Prometheus, to be pawed and clawed and gnawed by a vulture? I beg your earldom's pardon; but I could not conceive that a coronet was so very tempting!

Lady Browne is quite recovered — unless she relapses from what we suffer at Twickenham-park, from a lord N * * * *, an old seaman, who is come to Richmond on a visit to the duke of Montrose. I think the poor man must be out of his senses— at least he talks us out of ours. It is the most incessant and incoherent rhapsody that ever was heard. He sits by the card-table, and pours on

Mrs. N * * * * all that ever happened in his voyages or his memory. He details the ship's allowance, and talks to her as if she was his first mate. Then in the mornings he carries his daughter to town to see St. Paul's, and the Tower, and Westminster-abbey; and at night disgorges all he has seen; till we don't know the ace of spades from queen Elizabeth's pocket-pistol in the armoury. Mercy on us! — And mercy on your lordship too! Why should you be stunned with that alarum? Have you had your earthquake, my lord? Many have had theirs. I assure you I have had mine. Above a week ago, when broad awake, the doors of the cabinet by my bed-side rattled, without a breath of wind. I imagined somebody was walking on the leads, or had broken into the room under me. It was between four and five in the morning. I rang my bell. Before my servant could come it happened again; and was exactly like the horizontal tremor I felt from the earthquake some years ago. As I had rung once, it is plain I was awake. I rang again; but heard nothing more. I am quite persuaded there was some commotion; nor is it surprising that the dreadful eruptions of fire on the coasts of Italy and Sicily should have occasioned some alteration that has extended faintly hither, and contributed to the heats and mists that have been so extraordinary. George Montagu said of our last earthquake, that it was so tame you might have stroked it. It

is comfortable to live where one can reason on them without dreading them! What satisfaction should you have in having erected such a monument of your taste, my lord, as Wentworth-castle, if you did not know but it might be overturned in a moment and crush you? Sir William Hamilton is expected: he has been groping in all those devastations. — Of all vocations I would not be a professor of earthquakes! I prefer studies that are *couleur de rose* — nor would ever think of calamities, if I can do nothing to relieve them. Yet this is a weakness of mind that I do not defend. They are more respectable who can behold philosophically the great theatre of events — or rather this little theatre of ours! In some ampler sphere, they may look on the catastrophe of Messina as we do on kicking to pieces an ant-hill.

Bless me! what a farrago is my letter! It is like the extracts of books in a monthly magazine—I had no right to censure poor lord N****'s ramblings! Lady Strafford will think he has infected me. Good-night, my dear lord and lady!

Your ever devoted.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 15, 1783.

THE address from the Volunteers is curious indeed, and upon the first face a little Irish. What! would they throw off our parliament, and yet amend it? It is like correcting a question in the house of commons, and then voting against it. But I suppose they rather mean to increase confusion here, that we may not be at leisure to impede their progress — at least this may be the intention of the leaders. Large bodies are only led by being in earnest themselves, when their leaders are not so: —but my head is not clear enough to apply it to different matters — nor could I do any good if it were. Our whole system is become a disjointed chaos — and time must digest it — or blow it up shortly. — I see no way into it — nor expect any thing favourable but from chance, that often stops confusion on a sudden. To restore us by any system, it would require a single head furnished with wisdom, temper, address, fortitude, full and undivided power, and sincere patriotism divested of all personal views. Where is that prodigy to be found? — and how should it have the power, if it had all the rest? And if it had the power, how could it be divested of that power again? And if it were not, how long would it retain its virtues? Power and wisdom would soon unite, like Antony

and Augustus, to annihilate their colleague virtue, for being a poor creature like Lepidus. In short, the mass of matter is too big for me: I am going out of the world, and cannot trouble myself about it. I do think of your part in it, and wish to preserve you where you are, for the benefits that you may contribute. I have a high opinion of Mr. F., and believe that by frankness you may become real friends, which would be greatly advantageous to the country. There is no competition in my mind where you are concerned: but F. is the minister with whom I most wish you united—indeed, to all the rest I am indifferent or adverse; but, besides his superior abilities, he has a liberality of acting that is to my taste: it is like my father's plainness, and has none of the paltry little finesses of a statesman.

Your parties do not tempt me, because I am not well enough to join in them: nor yet will they stop me, though I had rather find only you and lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer. I am not seriously ill—nay, am better upon the whole than I was last year: but I perceive decays enough in myself to be sensible that the scale may easily be inclined to the worst side. This observation makes me very indifferent to every thing that is not much at my heart. Consequently what concerns you is, as it has always been for above forty years, a principal object. Adieu!

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 12, 1783.

Your lordship tells me you hope my summer has glided pleasantly, like our Thames. I cannot say it has passed very pleasantly to me, though, like the Thames, dry, and low; for somehow or other I caught a rheumatic fever in the great heats, and cannot get rid of it. I have just been at Park-place and Nuneham, in hopes change of air would cure me; but to no purpose. Indeed, as want of sleep is my chief complaint, I doubt I must make use of a very different and more disagreeable remedy, the air of London, the only place that I ever find agree with me when I am out of order. I was there for two nights a fortnight ago, and slept perfectly well. In vain has my predilection for Strawberry made me try to persuade myself that this was all fancy; but I fear, reasons that appear strong, though contrary to our inclinations, must be good ones. London at this time of year is as nauseous a drug as any in an apothecary's shop. I could find nothing at all to do, and so went to Astley's, which indeed was much beyond my expectation. I do not wonder any longer that Darius was chosen king by the instructions he gave to his horse; nor that Caligula made his consul. Astley can make his dance minuets and

hornpipes; which is more extraordinary than to make them vote at an election, or act the part of a magistrate, which animals of less capacities can perform as dexterously as a returning officer or a master in chancery.—But I shall not have even Astley now. Her majesty the queen of France, who has as much taste as Caligula, has sent for the whole *dramatis personæ* to Paris.

Sir William Hamilton was at Park-place, and gave us dreadful accounts of Calabria: he looks much older, and has the patina of a bronze.

At Nuneham I was much pleased with the improvements both within doors and without. Mr. Mason was there; and, as he shines in every art, was assisting Mrs. Harcourt with his new discoveries in painting, by which he will unite miniature and oil. Indeed, she is a very apt and extraordinary scholar. Since our professors seem to have lost the art of colouring, I am glad at least that they have ungraduated assessors.

We have plenty and peace at last; consequently leisure for repairing some of our losses, if we have sense enough to set about the task. On what will happen I shall make no conjectures, as it is not likely I should see much of what is to come. Our enemies have humbled us enough to content them; and we have succeeded so ill in innovations, that surely we shall not tempt new storms in haste.

From this place I can send your lordship nothing new or entertaining, nor expect more game in town, whither nothing but search of health should carry me. Perhaps it is a vain chace at my age; but at my age one cannot trust to nature's operating cures without aiding her; it is always time enough to abandon one's self when no care will palliate our decays. I hope your lordship and lady Strafford will long be in no want of such attentions; nor should I have talked so much of my own cracks, had I had any thing else to tell you. It would be silly to aim at vivacity when it is gone: and though a lively old man is sometimes an agreeable being, a pretending old man is ridiculous. Aches and an apothecary cannot give one genuine spirits; 'tis sufficient if they do not make one peevish. Your lordship is so kind as to accept of me as I am, and you shall find nothing more counterfeit in me than the sincere respect and gratitude with which I have the honour to be

Your lordship's

Most devoted humble servant.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 11, 1783.

My rheumatism, I thank your lordship, is certainly better, though not quite gone. It was very troublesome at night till I took the bark; but that medicine makes me sleep like opium——But I will say no more about it, nothing is so troublesome as to talk of chronical complaints: has one any right to draw on the compassion of others, when one must renew the address daily and for months?

The aspect of Ireland is very tempestuous. I doubt they will hurt us materially without benefiting themselves. If they obtain very short parliaments, they will hurt themselves more than us, by introducing a confusion that will prevent their improvements.—Whatever country does adopt short parliaments, will, I am entirely persuaded, be forced to recur to their former practice—I mean, if the disorders introduced do not produce despotism of some sort or other. I am very sorry Mr. Mason concurs in trying to revive the associations. Methinks our state is so deplorable, that every healing measure ought to be attempted instead of innovations. For my own part, I expect nothing but distractions, and am not concerned to be so old. I *am* so old, that, were I disposed to novelties, I should think they little became my age. I should be ashamed, when my hour shall

come, to be caught in a riot of country 'squires and parsons, and haranguing a mob with a shaking head. A leader of faction ought to be young and vigorous. If an aged gentleman does get an ascendant, he may be sure that younger men are counting on his exit, and only flatter him to succeed to his influence, while they are laughing at his misplaced activity. At least, these would be my thoughts, who of all things dread being a jest to the juvenile, if they find me out of my sphere.

I have seen lord C * * * * 's play, and it has a great deal of merit—perhaps more than your lordship would expect. The language and images are the best part, after the two principal scenes, which are really fine.

I did, as your lordship knows and says, always like and esteem lady F * * *. I scarce know my lord; but, from what I have heard of him in the House of Lords, have conceived a good opinion of his sense: of his character I never heard any ill—which is a great testimonial in his favour, when there are so many horrid characters, and when all that are conspicuous have their minutest actions tortured to depose against them.

You may be sure, my dear lord, that I heartily pity lady Strafford's and your loss of four-legged friends. Sense and fidelity are wonderful recommendations; and when one meets with them, and can be confident that one is not imposed upon, I cannot think that the two additional legs are any

drawback. At least I know that I have had friends who would never have vexed or betrayed me, if they had walked on all-fours.

I have no news to send your lordship—indeed I inquire for none, nor wish to hear any. Whence is any good to come? I am every day surprised at hearing people eager for news. If there is any, they are sure of hearing it. — How can one be curious to know one does not know what — and perpetually curious to know? Has one nothing to do but to hear and relate something new? — And why can one care about nothing but what one does not know? — And why is every event worth hearing, only because one has not heard it? Have not there been changes enough? divorces enough? bankruptcies and robberies enough? — and, above all, lies enough? — No; or people would not be every day impatient for the newspaper. I own, I am glad on Sunday when there is no paper, and no fresh lies circulating. Adieu, my good lord and lady! May you long enjoy your tranquillity, undisturbed by villainy, folly, and madness!

Your most faithful servant.

To GOVERNOR POWNALL.[1]

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 27, 1783.

I AM extremely obliged to you, sir, for the valuable communication made to me. It is extremely so to me, as it does justice to a memory I revere to the highest degree; and, I flatter myself, that it would be acceptable to that part of the world that loves truth — and that part will be the majority, as fast as *they* pass away who have an interest in preferring falsehood. Happily, truth is longer-lived than the passions of individuals; and, when mankind are not misled, they can distinguish white from black. I myself do not pretend to be unprejudiced; I must be so to the best of fathers; I should be ashamed to be quite impartial. No wonder then, sir, if I am greatly pleased with so able a justification; yet I am not so blinded, but that I can discern solid reasons for admiring your defence. You have placed that defence on sound and *new* grounds; and, though very briefly, have very learnedly stated and distinguished the landmarks of our constitution, and the encroachments made on it, by justly referring the principles of liberty to the Saxon system, and by imputing the

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[1] For Biographical Notice of Governor Pownall, see Nichol's Literary Anecdotes, vol. viii. p. 61.

corruptions of it to the Norman. This was a great deal too deep for that superficial mountebank Hume to go—for a mountebank he was. He mounted a system in the garb of a philosophic empiric, but dispensed no drugs but what he was authorised to vend by a royal patent, and which were full of Turkish opium. He had studied nothing relative to the English constitution before queen Elizabeth, and had selected her most arbitrary acts to countenance those of the Stuarts; and even hers he misrepresented; for her worst deeds were levelled against the nobility, those of the Stuarts against the people. Hers, consequently, were rather an obligation to the people; for the most heinous part of despotism is, that it produces a thousand despots instead of one. Muley Moloch cannot lop off many heads with his own hands—at least, he takes those in his way, those of his courtiers—but his bashaws and viceroys spread destruction every where.—The flimsy, ignorant, blundering manner in which Hume executed the reigns preceding Henry VII. is a proof how little he had examined the history of our constitution.—I could say much, much more, sir, in commendation of your work, were I not apprehensive of being biassed by the subject. Still, that it would not be from flattery, I will prove, by taking the liberty of making two objections; and they are only to the last page but one. Perhaps you will think that my first objection does show

that I am too much biassed.—I own I am sorry to see my father compared to Sylla. The latter was a sanguinary usurper, a monster—the former, the mildest, most forgiving, best natured of men, and a *legal* minister. Nor, I fear, will the only light in which you compare them, stand the test. Sylla resigned his power, voluntarily, insolently—perhaps timidly, as he might think he had a better chance of dying in his bed, if he retreated, than by continuing to rule by force. My father did not retire by his own option. He had lost the majority of the House of Commons. Sylla, you say, sir, retired unimpeached—it is true, but covered with blood. My father was not *impeached*, in our strict sense of the word; but, to my great joy, he was in effect. A secret committee, a worse inquisition than a jury, was named—not to try him—but to sift his life for crimes—and out of such a jury, chosen in the dark, and not one of them he might challenge, he had some determined enemies, many opponents, and but two he could suppose his friends. And what was the consequence? A man charged with every state crime almost, for twenty years, was proved to have done—what? Paid some writers much more than they deserved, for having defended him against ten thousand and ten thousand libels (some of which had been written by his inquisitors), all which libels were confessed to have been lies by his inquisitors themselves—for they could not produce a shadow of one of the

crimes with which they had charged him! I must own, sir, I think that Sylla and my father ought to be set in opposition rather than paralleled. My other objection is still more serious; and if I am so happy as to convince you, I shall hope that you will alter the paragraph, as it seems to impute something to sir Robert, of which he was not only most innocent, but of which, if he had been guilty, I should think him extremely so, for he would have been very ungrateful. You say he had not the comfort to see that he had established his own family by any thing which he received from the gratitude of that Hanover family, or from the gratitude of that country, which he had saved and served! — Good sir, what does this sentence seem to imply, but that either sir Robert himself, or his family, thought or think, that the kings George I. and II. or England, were ungrateful in not rewarding his services? — Defend him and us from such a charge! He nor we ever had such a thought. Was it not rewarding him to make him prime minister, and maintain and support him against his enemies for twenty years together? Did not George I. make his eldest son a peer, and give to the father and son a valuable patent place in the Custom-house for three lives? Did not George II. give my elder brother the Auditor's place, and to my brother and me other rich places for our lives—for, though in the gift of the first lord of the treasury, do we not owe them to

the king who made him so? Did not the late king make my father an earl, and dismiss him with a pension of 4000*l.* a-year for his life? Could he or we not think these ample rewards? What rapacious sordid wretches must he and we have been, and be, could we entertain such an idea? As far have we all been from thinking him neglected by his country. Did not his country see and know these rewards? and could it think these rewards inadequate? Besides, sir, great as I hold my father's services, they were solid and silent, not ostensible. They were of a kind to which I hold your justification a more suitable reward than pecuniary recompences. To have fixed the house of Hanover on the throne, to have maintained this country in peace and affluence for twenty years, with the other services you record, sir, were actions, the *eclat* of which must be illustrated by time and reflection; and whose splendor has been brought forwarder than I wish it had, by comparison with a period very dissimilar! If sir Robert had not the comfort of leaving his family in affluence, it was not imputable to his king or his country. Perhaps I am proud that he did not. He died forty thousand pounds in debt. That was the wealth of a man that had been taxed as the plunderer of his country! Yet, with all my adoration of my father, I am just enough to own that it was his own fault if he died so poor. He had made Houghton much too magnificent for the

moderate estate which he left to support it; and, as he never, I repeat it with truth, *never* got any money but in the South Sea and while he was paymaster, his fondness for his paternal seat, and his boundless generosity, were too expensive for his fortune. I will mention one instance, which will show how little he was disposed to turn the favour of the crown to his own profit. He laid out fourteen thousand pounds of his own money on Richmond New Park. I could produce other reasons too why sir Robert's family were not in so comfortable a situation, as the world, deluded by misrepresentation, might expect to see them at his death. — My eldest brother had been a very bad economist during his father's life, and died himself fifty thousand pounds in debt, or more; so that to this day neither sir Edward nor I have received the five thousand pounds a-piece which sir Robert left us as our fortunes. I do not love to charge the dead; therefore will only say, that lady Orford (reckoned a vast fortune, which till she died she never proved) wasted vast sums; nor did my brother or father *ever* receive but the twenty thousand pounds which she brought at first, and which were spent on the wedding and christening; I mean, including her jewels.

I beg pardon, sir, for this tedious detail, which is minutely, perhaps too minutely, true; but, when I took the liberty of contesting any part of a work which I admire so much, I owed it to you

and to myself to assign my reasons. I trust they will satisfy you; and, if they do, I am sure you will alter a paragraph, against which it is the duty of the family to exclaim. Dear as my father's memory is to my soul, I can never subscribe to the position that he was unrewarded by the house of Hanover. I have the honour to be, sir, with great respect and gratitude,

Your most obliged and obedient
humble servant.

P. S. I did not take the liberty of retaining your essay, sir; but should be very happy to have a copy of it at your leisure.

To GOVERNOR POWNALL.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 7, 1783.

You must allow me, sir, to repeat my thanks for the second copy of your tract on my father, and for your great condescension in altering the two passages to which I presumed to object; and which are not only more consonant to exactness, but, I hope, no disparagement to the piece. To me they are quite satisfactory. And it is a comfort to me too, that what I begged to have changed was not any reflection prejudicial to his memory; but, in the first point, a parallel not

entirely similar in circumstances; and, in the other, a sort of censure on others to which I could not subscribe. With all my veneration for my father's memory, I should not remonstrate against just censure on him. Happily, to do justice to him, most iniquitous calumnies ought to be removed; and then there would remain virtues and merits enough, far to outweigh human errors, from which the best of men, like him, cannot be exempt. Let his enemies, aye and his *friends*, be compared with him — and then justice would be done! Your Essay, sir, will, I hope, some time or other, clear the way to his vindication. It points out the true way of examining his character; and is itself, as far as it goes, unanswerable. As such, what an obligation it must be to, sir,

Your most grateful and obedient
humble servant.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 10, 1783.

IF I consulted my reputation as a writer, which your lordship's partiality is so kind as to allot me, I should wait a few days till my granary is fuller of stock, which probably it would be by the end of next week — but in truth, I had rather be a grateful, and consequently a punctual correspon-

dent, than an ingenious one; as I value the honour of your lordship's friendship more than such tinsel bits of fame as can fall to my share, and of which I am particularly sick at present, as the Public Advertiser dressed me out t'other day with a heap of that dross, which he had pillaged from some other strolling playwrights, who I did not desire should be plundered for me.

Indeed, when the parliament does meet, I doubt, nay hope it will make less sensation than usual. The orators of Dublin have brought the flowers of Billingsgate to so high perfection, that ours comparatively will have no more scent than a dead dandelion. If your lordship has not seen the speeches of Mr. F * * * and Mr. G * * *, you may perhaps still think that our oyster-women can be more abusive than members of parliament.

Since I began my letter, I hear that the meeting of the delegates from the volunteers is adjourned to the first of February. This seems a very favourable circumstance. I don't like a reformation begun by a Popish army! Indeed I did hope that peace would bring us peace, at least not more than the discords incidental to a free government: but we seem not to have attained that era yet! I hope it will arrive, though I may not see it. I shall not easily believe that any radical alteration of a constitution that preserved us so long and carried us to so great a height, will recover our affairs. There is a wide difference between correcting abuses,

and removing landmarks. Nobody disliked more than I the strides that were attempted towards increasing the prerogative; but as the excellence of our constitution above all others, consists in the balance established between the three powers of king, lords, and commons, I wish to see that equilibrium preserved. No single man, nor any private junto, has a right to dictate laws to all three. In Ireland, truly, a still worse spirit I apprehend to be at bottom — in short, it is phrensy or folly to suppose that an army composed of three parts of Catholics can be intended for any good purposes.

These are my sentiments, my dear lord, and, you know, very disinterested. For myself, I have nothing to wish but ease and tranquillity for the rest of my time. I have no enmities to avenge. I do hope the present administration will last, as I believe there are *more* honest men in it, than in any set that could replace them, though I have not a grain of partiality more than I had for their associates. Mr. Fox I think by far the ablest and soundest head in England, and am persuaded that the more he is tried the greater man he will appear.

Perhaps it is impertinent to trouble your lordship with my creed — it is certainly of no consequence to any body — but I have nothing else that could entertain you — and at so serious a crisis, can one think of trifles? In general I am not sorry that the nation is most disposed to trifle — the less

it takes part, the more leisure will the ministers have to attend to the most urgent points. When so many individuals assume to be legislators, it is lucky that very few obey their institutes.

I rejoice to hear of lady Strafford's good health, and am her and your lordship's.

Most faithful humble servant.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 11, 1783.

YOUR lordship is so partial to me and my idle letters, that I am afraid of writing them—not lest they should sink below the standard you have pleased to affix to them in your own mind, but from fear of being intoxicated into attempting to keep them up to it, which would destroy their only merit, their being written naturally and without pretensions. Gratitude and good breeding compel me to make due answers; but I entreat your lordship to be assured, that however vain I am of your favour, my only aim is to preserve the honour of your friendship; that it is all the praise I ask or wish; and that, with regard to letter-writing, I am firmly persuaded that it is a province in which women will always shine superiorly; for our sex is too jealous of the reputation of good sense, to condescend to hazard a thousand trifles

and negligences, which give grace, ease, and familiarity to correspondence.—I will say no more on that subject, for I feel that I am on the brink of a dissertation—and though that fault would prove the truth of my proposition, I will not punish your lordship only to convince you that I am in the right.

The winter is not dull or disagreeable: on the contrary, it is pleasing, as the town is occupied on general subjects, and not, as is too common, on private scandal, private vices, and follies. The India bill, air-balloons, Vestris, and the automaton, share all attention. Mrs. Siddons, as less a novelty, does not engross all conversation. If abuse still keeps above par, it confines itself to its prescriptive province, the ministerial line. In that walk it has tumbled a little into the kennel—The low buffoonery of lord * * * *, in laying the caricatura of the Coalition on the table of your lordship's house, has levelled it to Sadler's Wells; and Mr. * * *, the pillar of invective, does not promise to re-erect it—not, I conclude, from want of having imported a stock of ingredients, but his presumptuous debut on the very night of his entry was so wretched, and delivered in so barbarous a brogue, that I question whether he will ever recover the blow Mr. Courtenay gave him. A young man may correct and improve, and rise from a first fall; but an elderly formed speaker has not an equal chance. Mr. H * * *, lord A * * * 's heir,

but by no means so laconic, had more success. Though his first essay, it was not at all dashed by bashfulness—and though he might have blushed for discovering so much personal rancour to Mr. Fox, he rather seemed to be impatient to discharge it.

Your lordship sees in the papers, that the two houses of Ireland have firmly resisted the innovations of the volunteers. Indeed it was time for the protestant proprietors to make their stand; for though the catholics behave decently, it would be into their hands that the prize would fall. The delegates, it is true, have sent over a most loyal address—but I wish their actions may not contradict their words! Mr. * * * *'s discomfiture here will, I suppose, carry him back to a field wherein his wicked spirit may have more effect. It is a very serious moment!—I am in pain lest your county, my dear lord (you know what I mean), should countenance such pernicious designs.

I am impatient for next month, for the pleasure of seeing your lordship and lady Strafford, and am of both

The devoted humble servant.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, Wednesday, May 5, 1784.

Your cherries, for ought I know, may, like Mr. Pitt, be half ripe before others are in blossom; but at Twickenham, I am sure, I could find dates and pomegranates on the quickset hedges, as soon as a cherry in swaddling-clothes on my walls. The very leaves on the horse-chesnuts are little snotty-nosed things, that cry and are afraid of the north-wind, and cling to the bough as if *old poker* was coming to take them away. For my part, I have seen nothing like spring but a chimney-sweeper's garland; and yet I have been three days in the country — and the consequence was, that I was glad to come back to town. I do not wonder that you feel differently; any thing is warmth and verdure when compared to poring over memorials. In truth, I think you will be much happier for being out of parliament. You could do no good there; you have no views of ambition to satisfy: — and when neither duty nor ambition calls (I do not condescend to name avarice, which never is to be satisfied, nor deserves to be reasoned with, nor has any place in your breast), I cannot conceive what satisfaction an elderly man can have in listening to the passions or follies of others: nor is eloquence such a banquet, when one knows that, whoever the cooks

are, whatever the sauces, one has eaten as good beef or mutton before — and, perhaps, as well dressed. It is surely time to live for one's self, when one has not a vast while to live; and you, I am persuaded, will live the longer for leading a country life. How much better to be planting, nay, making experiments on smoke (if not too dear), than reading applications from officers, a quarter of whom you could not serve, nor content three quarters! You had not time for necessary exercise; and, I believe, would have blinded yourself. In short, if you will live in the air all day, be totally idle, and not read or write a line by candle-light, and retrench your suppers, I shall rejoice in your having nothing to do but that dreadful punishment, pleasing yourself. Nobody has any claims on you; you have satisfied every point of honour; you have no cause for being particularly grateful to the opposition; and you want no excuse for living for yourself. Your resolutions on economy are not only prudent, but just; and, to say the truth, I believe that if you had continued at the head of the army, you would have ruined yourself. You have too much generosity to have curbed yourself, and would have had too little time to attend to doing so. I know by myself how pleasant it is to have laid up a little for those I love, for those that depend on me, and for old servants. Moderate wishes may be satisfied — and, which is still better, are less liable to

disappointment. I am not preaching, nor giving advice, but congratulating you: and it is certainly not being selfish, when I rejoice at your being thrown by circumstances into a retired life, though it will occasion my seeing less of you. But I have always preferred what was most for your own honour and happiness; and as you taste satisfaction already, it will not diminish, for they are the first moments of passing from a busy life to a quiet one that are the most irksome. You have the felicity of being able to amuse yourself with what the grave world calls trifles; but as gravity does not happen to be wisdom, trifles are full as important as what is respected as serious; and more amiable, as generally more innocent. Most men are bad or ridiculous, sometimes both: at least my experience tells me what my reading had told me before, that they are so in a great capital of a sinking country. If immortal fame is his object, a Cato may die—but he will do no good. If only the preservation of his virtue had been his point, he might have lived comfortably at Athens, like Atticus—who, by the way, happens to be as immortal; though I will give him credit for having had no such view. Indeed, I look on this country as so irrecoverably on the verge of ruin, from its enormous debt, from the loss of America, from the almost as certain prospect of losing India, that my pride would dislike to be an actor when the crash may happen.

You seem to think that I might send you more news. So I might, if I would talk of elections: but those, you know, I hate, as, in general, I do all details. How Mr. Fox has recovered such a majority I do not guess; still less do I comprehend how there could be so many that had not voted, after the poll had lasted so long. Indeed, I should be sorry to understand such mysteries.—Of new peers, or new elevations, I hear every day, but am quite ignorant which are to be true. Rumour always creates as many as the king, when he makes several. In fact, I do know nothing. Adieu!

P. S. The summer is come to town, but I hope is gone into the country too.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, May 21, 1784.

I AM perfectly satisfied with your epitaph[1], and would not have a syllable altered. It tells exactly what it means to say, and, that truth being an en-

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1 An epitaph for the monument erected by the states of Jersey to the memory of major Pearson, killed in the attack of that island by the French, in January, 1781.

comium, wants no addition or amplification. Nor do I love late language for modern facts, nor will European tongues perish since printing has been discovered. I should approve French least of all; it would be a kind of insult to the vanquished: and besides, the example of a hero should be held out to his countrymen rather than to their enemies. You must take care to have the word *caused*, in the last line but one, spelt rightly, and not *caus'd*.

I know nothing of the parliament but what you saw in the papers. I came hither yesterday, and am transported, like you, with the beauty of the country; aye, and with its perfumed air too. The *lilac-tide* scents even the insides of the rooms.

I desired lady Ailesbury to carry you lord Melcombe's Diary. It is curious indeed, not so much from the secrets it blabs, which are rather characteristic than novel, but from the wonderful folly of the author, who was so fond of talking of himself, that he tells all he knew of himself, though scarce an event that does not betray his profligacy; and (which is still more surprising that he should disclose) almost every one exposes the contempt in which he was held, and his consequential disappointments and disgraces!—Was ever any man the better for another's experience?—What a lesson is here against versatility!

I, who have lived through all the scenes unfolded, am entertained—but I should think that to

younger readers half the book must be unintelligible. He explains nothing but the circumstances of his own situation; and though he touches on many important periods, he leaves them undeveloped, and often undetermined. It is diverting to hear him rail at lord Halifax and others, for the very kind of double-dealing which he relates coolly of himself in the next page. Had he gone backwards, he might have given half a dozen volumes of his own life, with similar anecdotes and variations.

I am most surprised, that when self-love is the whole ground-work of the performance, there should be little or no attempt at shining as an author, though he was one. As he had so much wit too, I am amazed that not a feature of it appears. The discussion in the appendix, on the late prince's question for increase of allowance, is the only part in which there is sense or honesty.

There is, in the imperfect account of Rochfort, a strong circumstance or two that pleased me much. There are many passages that will displease several others throughout.

Mr. Coxe's Travels are very different: plain, clear, sensible, instructive, and entertaining. It is a noble work, and precious to me who delight in quartos: the two volumes contain twelve hundred pages—I have already devoured a quarter, though I have had them but three days.

[The rest of this letter is lost.]

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 25, 1784.

I can answer you very readily in your own tone, that is, about weather and country grievances, and without one word of news or politics; for I know neither, nor inquire of them. I am very well content to be at Strulbrug, and to *exist* after I have done *being:* and I am still better pleased that you are in the same way of thinking, or of not thinking; for I am sure both your health and your mind will find the benefits of living for yourself and family only. It were not fit that the young should concentre themselves in so narrow a circle—nor do the young seem to have any such intention. Let them mend or mar the world as they please—the world takes its own way upon the whole; and though there may be an uncommon swarm of animalculæ for a season, things return into their own channel from their own bias, before any effectual nostrum of fumigation is discovered. In the mean time I am for giving all due weight to local grievances, though with no natural turn towards attending to them:—but they serve for conversation. We have no newly-invented grubs to eat our fruit—indeed I have no fruit to be eaten—but I should not lament if the worms would eat my gardener, who, you know, is so bad an one, that I never have any thing in my garden. I am now waiting for dry

weather to cut my hay—though nature certainly never intended hay should be cut dry, as it always rains all June.—But here is a worse calamity: one is never safe by day or night: Mrs. Walsingham, who has bought your brother's late house at Ditton, was robbed a few days ago in the high road, within a mile of home, at *seven* in the evening. The *dii minorum gentium* pilfer every thing. Last night they stole a couple of yards of lead off the pediment of the door of my cottage. A gentleman at Putney, who has three men servants, had his house broken open last week, and lost some fine miniatures, which he valued so much, that he would not hang them up. You may imagine what a pain this gives me in my baubles! I have been making the round of my fortifications this morning, and ordering new works.

I am concerned for the account you give me of * * * * * *. Life does not appear to be such a jewel as to preserve it carefully for its own sake. I think the same of its *good things:* if they do not procure amusement or comfort, I doubt they only produce the contrary.—Yet it is silly to refine; for, probably, whatever any man does by choice, he knows will please him best, or at least will prevent greater uneasiness. I, therefore rather retract my concern; for with a vast fortune * * * * might certainly do what he would—and if, at his age, he can wish for more than that fortune will obtain, I may pity his taste or temper: but I shall

think that you and I are much happier who can find enjoyments in an humbler sphere, nor envy those who have no time for trifling. I, who have never done any thing else, am not at all weary of my occupation. Even three days of continued rain have not put me out of humour or spirits. *C'est beaucoup dire* for an *Anglois*. Adieu!

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 30, 1784.

INSTEAD of coming to you, I am thinking of packing up and going to town for winter, so desperate is the weather! I found a great fire at Mrs. Clive's this evening, and Mr. Raftor hanging over it like a smoked ham. They tell me my hay will be all spoiled for want of cutting; but I had rather it should be destroyed by standing than by being mowed, as the former will cost me nothing but the crop, and 'tis very dear to make nothing but a water souchy of it.

You know I have lost a niece, and found another nephew: he makes the fifty-fourth, reckoning both sexes. We are certainly an affectionate family, for of late we do nothing but marry one another.

Have not YOU felt a little twinge in a remote corner of your heart on lady * * *'s death? She

dreaded death so extremely that I am glad she had not a moment to be sensible of it. I have a great affection for sudden deaths—they save one's self and every body else a deal of ceremony.

The duke and duchess of M * * * breakfasted here on Monday, and seemed much pleased, though it rained the whole time with an Egyptian darkness. I should have thought there had been deluges enough to destroy all Egypt's other plagues; but the newspapers talk of locusts—I suppose relations of your beetles, though probably not so fond of green fruit; for the scene of their campaign is Queen-square, Westminster, where there certainly has not been an orchard since the reign of Canute.

I have, at last, seen an air-balloon—just as I once did see a tiny review, by passing one accidentally on Hounslow-heath. I was going last night to lady Onslow at Richmond, and over Mr. Cambridge's field I saw a bundle in the air not bigger than the moon, and she herself could not have descended with more composure if she had expected to find Endymion fast asleep. It seemed to 'light on Richmond-hill; but Mrs. H * * * was going by, and her *coiffeure* prevented my seeing it alight. The papers say, that a balloon has been made at Paris, representing the castle of Stockholm, in compliment to the king of Sweden; but that they were afraid to let it off—so, I suppose, it will be served up to him in a

dessert. No great progress, surely, is made in these airy navigations, if they are still afraid of risking the necks of two or three subjects for the entertainment of a visiting sovereign. There is seldom a *feu de joie* for the birth of a dauphin that does not cost more lives. I thought royalty and science never haggled about the value of blood when experiments are in question.

I shall wait for summer before I make you a visit. Though I dare to say that you have converted your smoke-kilns into a manufacture of balloons, pray do not erect a Strawberry castle in the air for my reception, if it will cost a pismire a hair of its head. Good-night!—I have ordered my bed to be heated as hot as an oven, and Tonton and I must go into it.

To the EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 6, 1784.

I am very sorry, my dear lord, that I must answer your lordship's letter by a condolence. I had not the honour of being acquainted with Mrs. V***, but have heard so much good of her, that it is impossible not to lament her.

Since this month began we have had fine weather, and 'twere great pity if we had not, when

the earth is covered with such abundant harvests! They talk of an earthquake having been felt in London. Had sir W. Hamilton been there he would think the town gave itself great airs. He, I believe, is *putting up* volcanos in his own country. In my youth, philosophers were eager to ascribe every uncommon discovery to the deluge; now it is the fashion to solve every appearance by conflagrations. If there was such an inundation upon the earth, and such a furnace under it, I am amazed that Noah and company were not boiled to death. Indeed, I am a great sceptic about human reasonings; they predominate only for a time, like other mortal fashions, and are so often exploded after the mode is passed, that I hold them little more serious, though they call themselves wisdom. How many have I lived to see established and confuted! For instance, the necessity of a southern continent as a balance was supposed to be unanswerable — and so it was, till captain Cook found there was no such thing. We are poor silly animals: we live for an instant upon a particle of a boundless universe, and are much like a butterfly that should argue about the nature of the seasons, and what creates their vicissitudes, and does not exist itself to see one annual revolution of them!

Adieu, my dear lord! — If my reveries are foolish, remember, I give them for no better. If I

depreciate human wisdom, I am sure I do not assume a grain to myself, nor have any thing to value myself upon more than being

Your lordship's

Most obliged humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 14, 1784.

As lady C. offers to be postman, I cannot resist writing a line, though I have not a word to say. In good sooth, I know nothing, hear of nothing but robberies and house-breaking; consequently never think of ministers, India directors, and such honest men. Mrs. Clive has been broken open, and Mr. Raftor miscarried and died of the fright. Lady * * *, has lost all her liveries and her temper, and lady * * * has cried her eyes out on losing a lurch and almost her wig.—In short, as I do not love exaggeration, I do not believe there have been above threescore highway robberies within this week, fifty-seven houses that have been broken open, and two hundred and thirty that are to be stripped on the first opportunity. We are in great hopes, however, that the king of Spain, now he has demolished Algiers, the metropolitan see of thieves, will come and bombard Richmond, Twickenham, Hampton-court, and all the suffragan cities

that swarm with pirates and banditti, as he has a better knack at destroying vagabonds than at recovering his own.

Ireland is in a blessed way; and as if the climate infected every body that sets foot there, the viceroy's aides-de-camp have *blundered* into a riot, that will set all the humours afloat.

I wish you joy of the summer being come now it is gone, which is better than not coming at all. I hope lady C. will return with an account of your all being perfectly well. Adieu!

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 7, 1784.

THE summer is come at last, my lord, drest as fine as a birth-day, though not with so many flowers on its head. In truth, the sun is an old fool, who apes the modern people of fashion by arriving too late: the day is going to bed before he makes his appearance; and one has scarce time to admire his embroidery of green and gold. It was cruel to behold such expanse of corn every where, and yet see it all turned to a water-souchy. If I could admire Dante, which, asking Mr. Hayley's pardon, I do not, I would have written an olio of Jews and Pagans, and sent Ceres to reproach master Noah with breaking his promise of the world never being

drowned again.—But this last week has restored matters to their old channel; and I trust we shall have bread to eat next winter, or I think we must have lived on apples, of which to be sure there is enough to prevent a famine. This is all I know, my lord; and I hope no news to your lordship. I have exhausted the themes of air-balloons and highwaymen; and if you *will* have my letters, you must be content with my common-place chat on the seasons. I do nothing worth repeating, nor hear that others do: and though I am content to rust myself, I should be glad to tell your lordship any thing that would amuse you. I dined two days ago at Mrs. Garrick's with sir William Hamilton, who is returning to the kingdom of cinders. Mrs. Walsingham was there with her son and daughter. He is a very pleasing young man; a fine figure; his face like hers, with something of his grandfather sir Charles Williams, without his vanity; very sensible, and uncommonly well bred. The daughter is an imitatress of Mrs. Damer, and has modelled a bust of her brother. Mrs. Damer herself is modelling two masks for the key-stones of the new bridge at Henley. Sir William, who has seen them, says they are in her true antique style. I am in possession of her sleeping dogs in terra cotta. She asked me if I would consent to her executing them in marble for the duke of Richmond?—I said, Gladly; I should like they should exist in a more durable material—but I would

not part with the original, which is sharper and more alive. Mr. Wyat the architect saw them here lately; and said, he was sure that if the idea was given to the best statuary in Europe, he would not produce so perfect a groupe. Indeed, with these dogs and the riches I possess by lady Di[1], poor Strawberry may vie with much prouder collections.

Adieu, my good lord! when I fold up a letter I am ashamed of it—but it is your own fault. The last thing I should think of would be troubling your lordship with such insipid stuff, if you did not command it. Lady Strafford will bear me testimony how often I have protested against it.

I am her ladyship's and your lordship's
Obedient humble servant.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 15, 1784.

As I have heard nothing from you, I flatter myself lady A. mends, or I think you would have brought her again to the physicians: you will, I conclude, next week, as towards the end of it the

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[1] The number of original drawings by lady Diana Beauclerc, at Strawberry-hill.

ten days they named will be expired. I must be in town myself about Thursday on some little business of my own.

As I was writing this, my servants called me away to see a balloon — I suppose Blanchard's, that was to be let off from Chelsea this morning. I saw it from the common field before the window of my round tower. It appeared about a third of the size of the moon, or less, when setting, something above the tops of the trees on the level horizon. It was then descending; and after rising and declining a little, it sunk slowly behind the trees, I should think about or beyond Sunbury, at five minutes after one. But you know I am a very inexact guesser at measures and distances, and may be mistaken in many miles; and you know how little I have attended to those *airgonauts:* only t'other night I diverted myself with a sort of meditation on future *airgonation*, supposing that it will not only be perfected, but will depose navigation. I did not finish it, because I am not skilled, like the gentleman that used to write political ship-news, in that style, which I wanted to perfect my essay: but in the prelude I observed how ignorant the ancients were in supposing Icarus melted the wax of his wings by too near access to the sun, whereas he would have been frozen to death before he made the first post on that road. Next, I discovered an alliance between bishop Wilkins's art of flying and his plan of an universal

language; the latter of which he no doubt calculated to prevent the want of an interpreter when he should arrive at the moon.

But I chiefly amused myself with ideas of the change that would be made in the world by the substitution of balloons to ships. I supposed our seaports to become *deserted villages*, and Salisbury-plain, Newmarket-heath, (another canvass for alteration of ideas), and all downs (but *the* Downs) arising into dock-yards for aërial vessels. Such a field would be ample in furnishing new speculations.—But to come to my ship-news.

The good balloon Dædalus, capt. Wing-ate, will fly in a few days for China; he will stop at the top of the Monument to take in passengers.

Arrived on Brand-sands, the Vulture, capt. Nabob; the Tortoise snow, from Lapland; the Pet-en-l'air, from Versailles; the Dreadnought, from mount Etna, sir W. Hamilton commander; the Tympany, Montgolfier; and the Mine-A-in-a-bandbox, from the cape of Good Hope. Foundered in a hurricane, the Bird of Paradise, from mount Ararat. The Bubble, Sheldon, took fire, and was burnt to her gallery; and the Phœnix is to be cut down to a second rate. — In those days Old Sarum will again be a town and have houses in it. There will be fights in the air with wind-guns and bows and arrows; and there will be prodigious increase of land for tillage, especially in France, by breaking up all public roads as useless.

But enough of my fooleries, for which I am sorry you must pay double postage.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 13, 1784.

THANK you a thousand times, dear madam, for your obliging letter and the new *Bristol stones* you have sent me, which would pass on a more skilful lapidary than I am for having been brilliantied by a professed artist, if you had not told me that they came shining out of a native mine, and had no foreign diamond-dust to polish them. Indeed can one doubt any longer that Bristol is as rich and warm a soil as India? I am convinced it has been so of late years, though I question its having been so luxuriant in alderman Canning's days; and I have MORE reasons for thinking so, than from the marvels of Chatterton.—But I will drop metaphors, lest some nabob should take me *au pié de la lettre*, fit out an expedition, plunder your city, and massacre you for weighing *too many* carats.

Seriously, madam, I am surprised — and chiefly at the kind of genius of this unhappy female.[1]

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[1] Mrs. Yearsley, the milkwoman of Bristol.

Her ear, as you remark, is perfect — but that being a gift of nature, amazes me less. Her expressions are more exalted than poetic; and discover taste, as you say, rather than discover flights of fancy and wild ideas, as one should expect. I should therefore advise her quitting blank verse, which wants the highest colouring to distinguish it from prose; whereas her taste, and probably good sense, might give sufficient beauty to her rhymes.

Her not being learned is another reason against her writing in blank verse. Milton employed all his reading, nay all his geographic knowledge, to enrich his language — and succeeded. They who have imitated him in that particular, have been mere monkeys; and they who neglected it, flat and poor.

Were I not persuaded by the samples you have sent me, madam, that this woman has talents, I should not advise her encouraging her propensity, lest it should divert her from the care of her family, and, after the novelty is over, leave her worse than she was. When the late queen patronised Stephen Duck, who was only a wonder at first, and had not genius enough to support the character he had promised, twenty artisans and labourers turned poets, and starved. Your poetess can scarce be more miserable than she is, and even the reputation of being an authoress may procure her customers: but as poetry is one of

your least excellencies, madam (your virtues will forgive me), I am sure you will not only give her counsels for her works, but for her conduct; and your gentleness will blend them so judiciously, that she will mind the friend as well as the mistress. She must remember that she is a Lactilla, not a Pastora; and is to tend real cows, not Arcadian sheep.

What! if I should go a step farther, dear madam, and take the liberty of reproving you for putting into this poor woman's hands such a frantic thing as the Castle of Otranto? It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written; an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination, than to be led astray by it:—but you will have made a hurly-burly in this poor woman's head, which it cannot develop and digest.

I will not reprove, without suggesting something in my turn. Give her Dryden's Cock and Fox, the standard of good sense, poetry, nature, and ease. I would recommend others of his tales: but her imagination is already too gloomy, and should be enlivened; for which reason I do not name Mr. Gray's Eton Ode and Church-yard. Prior's Solomon (for I doubt his Alma, though far

superior, is too learned for her limited reading) would be very proper. In truth, I think the cast of the age (I mean in its compositions) is too *sombre*. The flimsy giantry of Ossian has introduced mountainous horrors. The exhibitions at Somerset-house are crowded with Brobdignag ghosts. Read and explain to her a charming poetic familiarity called the Blue-Stocking Club. If she has not your other pieces, might I take the liberty, madam, of begging you to buy them for her, and let me be in your debt? And that your lessons may win their way more easily, even though her heart be good, will you add a guinea or two, as you see proper?—And though I do not love to be named, yet, if it would encourage a subscription, I should have no scruple. It will be best to begin moderately; for, if she should take Hippocrene for Pactolus, we may hasten her ruin, not contribute to her fortune.

On recollection, you had better call me Mr. Any-body, than name my name, which I fear is in bad odour at Bristol, on poor Chatterton's account; and it may be thought that I am atoning his ghost: though, if his friends would show my letters to him, you would find that I was as tender to him as to your milkwoman: but *that* they have never done, among other instances of their injustice. However, I beg you to say nothing on that subject, as I have declared I would not.

I have seen our excellent friend in Clarges-

street:[2] she complains as usual of her deafness; but I assure you it is at least not worse, nor is her weakness. Indeed I think both her and Mr. Vesey better than last winter. When will you *blue-stocking* yourself and come amongst us? Consider how many of us are veterans; and though we do not trudge on foot according to the institution, we may be out at heels—and the heel, you know, madam, has never been privileged. I am, with the sincerest regard, madam,

Your much obliged and obedient
humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Sunday night, Nov. 28, 1784.

I HAVE received the parcel of papers you sent me,[3] which I conclude come from lord Strafford, and will apply them as well as I possibly can, you may be sure—but with little hope of doing any good: humanity is no match for cruelty. There are now and then such angelic beings as Mr. Hanway and Mr. Howard; but our race in general is pestilently bad and malevolent. I have been these two

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[2] Mrs. Vesey.

[3] Against cruelty to dogs.

years wishing to promote my excellent Mr. Porter's plan for alleviating the woes of chimney-sweepers, but never could make impression on three people; on the contrary, have generally caused a smile.

G * * * * C * * * * 's intelligence of hostilities commenced between the Dutch and Imperialists makes me suppose that France will support the former — or could they resist? Yet I had heard that France would not. Some have thought, as I have done, that a combination of partition would happen between Austria, France, and Prussia, the modern law of nations for avoiding wars. I know nothing: so my conjectures may all be erroneous; especially as one argues from reason; a very inadequate judge, as it leaves passions, caprices, and accidents, out of its calculation. It does not seem the interest of France, that the emperor's power should increase in their neighbourhood and extend to the sea. Consequently it is France's interest to protect Holland in concert with Prussia. This last is a transient power, and may determine on the death of the present king; but the Imperial is a permanent force, and must be the enemy of France, however present connections may incline the scale.

In any case, I hope we shall no way be hooked into the quarrel; not only from the impotence of our circumstances, but as I think it would decide the loss of Ireland, which seems tranquillizing:

but should we have any bickering with France, she would renew the manœuvres she practised so fatally in America. These are my politics; I do not know with whose they coincide or disagree, nor does it signify a straw. Nothing will depend on my opinion; nor have I any opinion about them, but when I have nothing at all to do that amuses me more, or nothing else to fill a letter.

I can give you a sample of my idleness, which may divert lady Ailesbury and your academy of arts and sciences for a minute in the evening. It came into my head yesterday to send a card to lady Lyttelton, to ask when she would be in town —here it is in an heroic epistle:

From a castle as vast — as the castles on signs;
From a hill that all Africa's — mole-hills outshines,
This epistle is sent to a cottage so small,
That the door cannot ope, if you stand in the hall,
To a lady, who would be fifteen, if her knight
And old swain were as young as Methusalem quite:
It comes to inquire — not whether her eyes
Are as radiant as ever — but how many sighs
He must vent to the rocks and the echos around,
(Though nor echo nor rock in the parish is found)
Before she obdurate his passion will meet—
His passion to see her in Portugal-street.

As the sixth line goes rather too near the core, do not give a copy of it: however, I should be sorry if it displeased; though I do not believe it will, but be taken with good-humour as it was meant.

To Mr. PINKERTON.[1]

March 17, 1785.

I am much obliged to you, sir, for the many civil and kind expressions in your letter, and for the friendly information you give me. Partiality, I fear, dictated the former; but the last I can only ascribe to the goodness of your heart.

I have published nothing of any size but the pieces you mention, and one or two small tracts, now out of print and forgotten. The rest have been prefaces to some of my Strawberry editions, and to a few other publications, and some fugitive pieces, which I reprinted several years ago in a small volume, and which shall be at your service with the Catalogue of Noble Authors.

With regard to the bookseller who has taken the trouble to collect my writings (amongst which I do not doubt but he will generously bestow on me many that I did not write, according to the laudable practice of such compilers), and who also intends to write my life, to which, as I never did any thing worth the notice of the public, he must likewise be a volunteer contributor, it would be

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[1] The author of an Essay on Medals, and the History of Scotland from the Accession of the House of Stuart to that of Mary, &c. &c.

vain for me to endeavour to prevent such a design. Whoever has been so unadvised as to throw himself on the public, must pay such a tax in a pamphlet or a magazine when he dies; but happily the insects that prey on carrion, are still more short-lived than the carcases were from which they draw temporary nutriment. Those momentary abortions live but a day, and are thrust aside by like embryos. Literary characters, when not illustrious, are known only to a few literary men, and, amidst the world of books, few readers can come to my share. Printing, that secures existence (in libraries) to indifferent authors of any bulk, is like those cases of Egyptian mummies which in catacombs preserve bodies of one knows not whom, and which are scribbled over with characters that nobody attempts to read, till nobody understands the language in which they were written.

I believe, therefore, it will be most wise to swim for a moment on the passing current, secure that it will soon hurry me into the ocean where all things are forgotten. To appoint a biographer is to bespeak a panegyric; and I doubt whether they who collect their works for the public, and like me are conscious of no intrinsic worth, do not beg mankind to accept of talents (whatever they were) in lieu of virtues. To anticipate spurious publications by a comprehensive and authentic one is almost as great an evil. It is giving

a body to scattered atoms — and such an act in one's old age is declaring a fondness for the indiscretions of youth, or for trifles of an age, which though more mature, is only the less excusable. It is most true, sir, that so far from being prejudiced in favour of my own writings, I am persuaded that, had I thought early as I think now, I should never have appeared as an author. Age, frequent illness, and pain, have given me many hours of reflection in the intervals of the latter, which, besides showing me the inutility of all our little views, have suggested an observation that I love to encourage in myself from the rationality of it. I have learnt and have practised the mortifying task of comparing myself with great authors, and that comparison has annihilated all the flattery that self-love could suggest. I know how trifling my own writings are, and how far below the standard that constitutes excellence — for the shades that distinguish the degrees of mediocrity, they are not worth discrimination; and he must be humble, or easily satisfied, who can be content to glimmer for a moment a little more than his brethren glow-worms. Mine therefore, you find, sir, is not humility, but pride. When young, I wished for fame; not examining whether I was capable of attaining it, nor considering in what light fame was desirable. There are two sorts of honest fame — that attendant on the truly great, and that better kind which is due to the good. I

fear I did not aim at the latter, nor discovered that I could never compass the former. Having neglected the best road, and having instead of the other strolled into a narrow path that led to no goal worth seeking, I see the idleness of my journey, and hold it more graceful to abandon my wanderings to chance or oblivion, than to mark solicitude for trifles which I think so myself.

I beg your pardon for talking so much about myself; but an answer was due to the unmerited attention you have paid to my writings. I turn with more pleasure to speak on yours. Forgive me if I shall blame you, whether you either abandon your intention,[2] or are too impatient to finish it. Your preface proves that you are capable of treating the subject ably—but allow me to repeat, that it is a kind of subject that ought not to be executed impetuously. A mere recapitulation of authenticated facts would be dry. A more enlarged plan would demand acquaintance with the characters of the actors, and with the *probable* sources of measures. The age is accustomed to details and anecdotes; and the age immediately preceding his own is less known to any man than the history of any other period. You are young enough, sir, to collect information on many particulars that will occur in your progress, from living

[2] Of writing a History of the reign of George II.

actors, at least from their contemporaries; and great as your ardour may be, you will find yourself delayed by the want of materials and by further necessary inquiries. As you have variety of talents, why should you not exercise them on works that will admit of more rapidity, and at the same time, at leisure moments, commence, digest, and enrich your plan by collecting new matter for it?

In one word, I have too much zeal for your credit, not to dissuade precipitation in a work of the kind you meditate. That I speak sincerely and without flattery, you are sure, as accident, not design, made you acquainted with my admiration of your tract on medals. If I wish to delay your history, it must be that it may appear with more advantages; and I must speak disinterestedly, as my age will not allow me to hope to see it, if not finished soon. I should not forgive myself if I turned you from prosecution of your work—but as I am sure my writings can have given you no opinion of my having sound and deep judgment, pray follow your own, and allow no merit but that of sincerity and zeal to the sentiments of

Your obliged and
obedient humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.[1]

Berkeley-square, April 5, 1785.

Had I not heard part of your conversation with Mrs. Carter the other night, madam, I should certainly not have discovered the authoress of the very ingenious anticipation of our future jargon. How should I? I am not fortunate enough to know all your talents;—nay, I question whether you yourself suspect all you possess. Your *Bas-bleus* is in a style very different from any of your other productions that I have seen; and this letter, which shows your intuition into the degeneracy of our language, has a vein of humour and satire that could not be calculated from your *Bas-bleus*, in which good-nature and good-humour had made a great deal of learning wear all the ease of familiarity. I did wish you to write another Percy — but I beg now that you will first produce a specimen of *all* the various manners in which you can shine; for, since you are as modest as if your issue were illegitimate, I don't know but, like some females really in fault, you would stifle

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[1] This is an answer to an anonymous letter sent to Mr. Walpole by Mrs. H. More, ridiculing the prevailing adoption of French idioms into the English language.

some of your pretty infants, rather than be detected and blush.

In the mean time, I beseech you not only to print *your specimen of the language that is to be in fashion*, but have it entered at Stationers'-hall; or depend upon it, if ever a copy falls into the hands of a fine gentleman yet unborn, who shall be able both to read and write, he will adopt your letter for his own, and the Galimatias will give the ton to the Court, as Euphues[2] did near two hundred years ago; and then you will have corrupted our language instead of defending it: — and surely it is not *your* interest, madam, to have pure English grow obsolete.

If you do not promise to grant my request, I will show your letter every where to those that are worthy of seeing it;—that is, indeed, in very few places; — for you *shall* have the honour of it. It is one of those compositions that prove themselves standards, by begetting imitations; and if the genuine parent is unknown, it will be ascribed to every body that is supposed (in his own set) to have more wit than the rest of the world. I should be diverted, I own, to hear it faintly disavowed by some who would wish to pass for its

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[2] "Euphues and his England" was written by John Lilly, and published in quarto in 1580.

authors: — but still there is more pleasure in doing justice to merit, than in drawing vain pretensions into a scrape; and therefore I think you and I had better be honest and acknowledge it, though to you (for I am out of the question, but as evidence) it will be painful; for though the proverb says, "Tell truth and shame the devil," I believe he is never half so much confounded as a certain amiable young gentlewoman who is discovered to have more taste and abilities than she ever ventured to ascribe to herself even in the most private dialogues with her own heart, especially when that native friend is so pure as to have no occasion to make allowances even for self-love. For my part, I am most seriously obliged to you, madam, for so agreeable and kind a communication, and am, with sincere regard,

Your most grateful and obedient
humble servant.

TO MR. PINKERTON.

June 25, 1785.

I AM much obliged to your book,[1] sir, on many accounts, particularly for having recalled my mind

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[1] Letters on Literature, under the name of Heron.

to subjects of delight to which it was grown dulled by age and indolence. In consequence of your reclaiming it, I asked myself why you feel so much disregard to certain authors whose fame is established. — You have assigned good reasons for withholding your approbation from some, from their being imitators — It was natural then to ask myself again, whence they had obtained so much celebrity? — I think I have discovered a cause which I do not remember to have seen noted; and that cause I think was, that such authors possessed grace. Do not suspect me for a disciple of lord Chesterfield — nor imagine that I mean to erect grace into a capital ingredient in writing. But I do believe that it is a perfume that will preserve from putrefaction, and is distinct even from style. It is from the charm of grace that I believe some authors not in your favour obtained part of their renown — Virgil in particular. — Though I am far from disagreeing with you on him in general — I think there is such a want of invention (and when he did invent it was so foolishly), so little good sense, so little variety, and so little power over the passions, that I have often said, from contempt for his matter, and from the charm of his harmony, I believe I should like him better if I was to hear the Æneid repeated and did not understand Latin.—But he has more than harmony; whatever he utters is said gracefully— A Roman farmer might not understand the

Georgic, but a Roman courtier was made to understand farming — the farming of that age — and Virgil could captivate a lord of Augustus's bedchamber; and tempt him to listen to themes of rusticity. This I think is more than the power of style; it was ennobling the subject: I confess I admire Mr. Addison's phrase, that Virgil tossed his dung about with an air of majesty. A style may be excellent without grace — for instance Swift's. Eloquence may bestow a lasting style and one of more dignity; but eloquence may want that ease, that genteel air, that flows from or constitutes grace. Addison was master of that grace in his pieces of humour, and, perhaps from that secret, excels all men that ever lived but Shakspeare, in humour, by never dropping into an approach to burlesque and buffoonery, even when his humour descended to characters that in any other hands would have been vulgarly low. Fielding had as much humour perhaps as Addison, but, having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting.

The Grecians had grace in every thing — in oratory, in poetry, in statuary, in architecture, and I dare say in painting and music.

The Romans, it is true, were their imitators, but, having grace too, imparted it to their copies, which gave them a merit that almost raises them to a level with the originals.

Horace's odes acquired their fame, no doubt,

from the graces of his style—a capital merit of both Tibullus and Propertius, who certainly cannot boast of more meaning than there is in Horace's odes.

Waller, whom you proscribe, sir, owed his fame to the graces of his manner, though he frequently stumbled and even fell flat—but a few of his smaller pieces are as graceful as possible.

Milton has merit so much superior, that I will only say, that if his Raphael, his Satan, and his Adam have as much dignity as the Apollo Belvidere, his Eve has all the delicacy of the Venus of Medici, and his description of Eden has the colouring of Albano. His tenderness always imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonnas, and the Allegro, Penseroso, and Comus might be denominated from the three Graces.

Milton's soul was full of poetry, sense, and fire, and he had improved all those qualities by studying the best models.

Thus prepared, he gave a loose to his genius, which was too impetuous and sublime to be curbed by the mechanism of rhyme, which would often have impeded his expressing all he felt, and oftener perhaps have obliged him to add frigidities to help out the return of the sound. The language, therefore, of Milton's blank verse was not studied, but the natural application of his own tongue to deliver his own ideas. The imitators of Milton, on the contrary, study his phrase to express common

ideas, their own ideas, void of his vigour. Thence the diction of Thomson, Akenside, &c. &c. is less easy than it would have been if they had written in rhyme. Their language is not poetic, but bombast prose, or rather prose dressed in poetic rags. The Paradise Lost is like M. Angelo's Moses — The Seasons, and the Pleasures of the Imagination, like the king of hearts and diamonds, with robes made of patches of gaudy colours, that do not unite, and differ from the knaves but by the length of their trains.

Cowley, I think, would have had grace, for his mind was graceful, if he had had any ear, or if his taste had not been vitiated by the pursuit of wit; for false wit always deviates into tinsel or pertness. Pertness is mistaken affectation of grace, as pedantry is erroneous dignity — The familiarity of the one, and the clumsiness of the other prevent or destroy grace.

Nature, that produces samples of all qualities, and in the scale of gradation exhibits all possible shades, affords us types that are more apposite than words. The eagle is sublime, the lion majestic, the swan graceful, the monkey pert, the bear ridiculously awkward. I mention these as more expressive than I could make definitions of my meaning: but I will only apply the swan, under whose wings I will shelter an apology for Racine, whose pieces give me the idea of that bird. The colouring of the swan is pure, his atti-

tudes are graceful; he never displeases you when sailing on his proper element. His feet are ugly, his walk not natural — he can soar, but it is with difficulty. Still the impression a swan leaves is that of grace. So does Racine.

Boileau may be compared to the dog, whose sagacity is remarkable, as well as its fawning on its master, and its snarling at those he dislikes. If Boileau was too stern to admit the pliancy of grace, he compensates by good sense and propriety. He is like (for I will drop animals) an upright magistrate, whom you respect, but whose public justice and severity leave an awe that discourages familiarity. His copies of the ancients may be too servile — but if a good translator deserves praise, Boileau deserves more — he certainly does not fall below his originals, and, considering when he wrote, has a greater merit still. By his imitations he held out to his countrymen models of taste, and banished totally the bad taste of his predecessors. For his Lutrin, replete with excellent poetry, wit, humour, and satire, he certainly was not obliged to the ancients. Except Horace, how little idea had either Greeks or Romans of wit and humour! Aristophanes and Lucian, compared with moderns, were, the one a blackguard, the other a buffoon. To my eyes, the Lutrin, the Dispensary, and the Rape of the Lock, are standards of elegance and grace not to be paralleled by antiquity, and are eternal and

mortifying reproaches to Voltaire, whose indelicacy in the Pucelle degraded him as much, when compared with the three authors I have named, as his Henriade leaves Virgil and even Lucan, whom he more resembles, by far his superiors. The Dunciad is dishonoured by the offensive images of the games, but the poetry appears to me admirable; and though the fourth book has obscurities, I prefer it to the three others. It has descriptions not surpassed by any poet that ever existed, and which surely a writer merely ingenious will never equal. The lines on Italy, on Venice, on Convents, have all that grace for which I contend, as an ingredient distinct from the general beauties allotted to poetry — and the Rape of the Lock (besides the originality of the invention) is a standard of graceful writing.

In general, I believe that what I call grace is denominated elegance — but I think grace is something higher. I will explain myself by instances rather than by words. Apollo is graceful, Mercury elegant.

Petrarch, perhaps, owed his whole merit to the harmony of his numbers, and the graces of his style. They conceal his want of meaning, and want of variety: and his complaints may have added an interest, which, had his passion been successful, and had expressed itself with equal sameness, would have made the number of his sonnets insupportable. Melancholy in a poet, I

am inclined to think, contributes to grace, when it is not disgraced by pitiful lamentations, like Ovid's and Cicero's in their banishment. We respect melancholy. A gay writer, who should only express satisfaction without variety, would soon be nauseous.

Madame de Sevigné is an instance of both—There is too much of grief for her daughter's absence—yet it is always expressed by new turns and new images. When she forgets her concern, and returns to her natural disposition, gaiety, every paragraph has novelty:—her allusions, her applications, are the happiest possible. She has the art of making you acquainted with all her acquaintance; and even with the spots she inhabited. Her language is correct, though unstudied; and when her mind is full of any great event, she interests you with the warmth of a dramatic writer, not with the chilling impartiality of an historian.—Pray read her account of the death of marshal Turenne, and of the arrival of king James in France, and tell me whether you do not know their persons as if you had lived at the time. For my part, if you will allow me a word of digression, I hate the cold impartiality recommended to historians.—*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi.*—But that I may not wander again, nor tire you, nor contradict you any more, I will finish, only interceding for grace, as an apology for several writers to whom I think you a little too severe.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, October 6, 1785.

I wondered I did not hear from you, as I concluded you returned. You have made me good amends by the entertaining story of your travels. If I were not too disjointed for long journeys, I should like to see much of what you have seen; but if I had the agility of Vestris, I would not purchase all that pleasure for my eyes at the expense of my unsociability, which could not have borne the hospitality you experienced. It was always death to me, when I did travel England, to have lords and ladies receive me and show me their castles, instead of turning me over to their housekeeper: it hindered my seeing any thing, and I was the whole time meditating my escape: but lady A. and you are not such sensitive plants, nor shrink and close up if a stranger holds out a hand.

I don't wonder you was disappointed with Jarvis's windows at New College: I had foretold their miscarriage: the old and the new are as mismatched as an orange and a lemon, and destroy each other; nor is there room enough to retire back and see half of the new; and sir Joshua's washy Virtues make the Nativity a dark spot from the darkness of the Shepherds, which

happened, as I knew it would, from most of Jarvis's colours not being transparent.

I have not seen the improvements at Blenheim. I used to think it one of the ugliest places in England; a giant's castle who had laid waste all the country round him. Every body now allows the merit of Brown's achievements there.

Of all your survey I wish most to see Beau Desert. Warwick-castle and Stowe I know by heart:—the first I had rather possess than any seat upon earth—not that I think it the most beautiful of all, though charming, because I am so intimate with all its proprietors for the last thousand years.

I have often and often studied the new plan of Stowe: it is pompous; but though the wings are altered, they are not lengthened. Though three parts of the edifices in the garden are bad, they enrich that insipid country, and the vastness pleases me more than I can defend.

I rejoice that your jaunt has been serviceable to lady A. The *charming-man*[1] is actually with me; but neither he nor I can keep our promise incontinently. He expects two sons of his brother sir William, whom he is to pack up and send to the Peres de l'Oratoire at Paris. I expect lord and lady W. to-morrow, who are to pass a few days with me: but both the *charming-man* and I

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1 Edward Jerningham, Esq.

will be with you soon. I have no objection to a wintry visit: as I can neither ride nor walk, it is more comfortable when most of my time is passed within doors. If I continue perfectly well, as I am, I shall not settle in town till after Christmas: there will not be half a dozen persons there for whom I care a straw.

I know nothing at all. The peace between the Austrian harpy and the frogs is made. They were stout, and preferred being gobbled to parting with their money. At last, France offered to pay the money for them. The harpy blushed — for the first time — and would not take it, but signed the peace, and will plunder somebody else.

Have you got Boswell's most absurd enormous book? — The best thing in it is a bon mot of lord Pembroke. The more one learns of Johnson, the more preposterous assemblage he appears of strong sense, of the lowest bigotry and prejudices, of pride, brutality, fretfulness, and vanity—and Boswell is the ape of most of his faults, without a grain of his sense. It is the story of a mountebank and his zany.

I forgot to say, that I wonder how, with your turn and knowledge and enterprise in scientific exploits, you came not to visit the duke of Bridgwater's operations — or did you omit them, because I should not have understood a word you told me? Adieu!

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 9, 1786.

It is very cruel, my dear madam, when you send me such charming lines,[1] and say such kind and flattering things to me and of me, that I cannot even thank you with my own poor hand; and yet my hand is as much obliged to you as my eye and ear and understanding. My hand was in great pain when your present arrived. I opened it directly, and sat to reading, till your music and my own vanity composed a quieting draught that glided to the ends of my fingers, and lulled the throbs into the deliquium that attends opium when it does not put one absolutely to sleep. I don't believe that the deity who formerly practised both poetry and physic, when gods got their livelihood by more than one profession, ever gave a recipe in rhyme; and therefore, since Dr. Johnson has prohibited application to Pagan divinities, and Mr. Burke has not struck medicine and poetry out of the list of sinecures, I wish you may get a patent for life for exercising both faculties. It would be a comfortable event for me; for, since

1 The poem of Florio, dedicated to Mr. Walpole.

I cannot wait on you to thank you, nor dare ask you

——— to call your doves yourself,

and visit me in your Parnassian quality, I might send for you as my *physicianess*. Yet why should not I ask you to come and see me? You are not such a prude as to

——— blush to show compassion,

though it should

——— not chance this year to be the fashion.[2]

And I can tell you, that powerful as your poetry is, and old as I am, I believe a visit from you would do me as much good almost as your verses. In the mean time, I beg you to accept of an addition to your Strawberry editions; and believe me to be, with the greatest gratitude,

Your too much honoured

And most obliged humble servant.

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[2] Vide Florio.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Sunday night, June 18, 1786.

I SUPPOSE you have been swearing at the east wind for parching your verdure, and are now weeping for the rain that drowns your hay. I have these calamities in common, and my constant and particular one, people that come to see my house, which unfortunately is more in request than ever. Already I have had twenty-eight sets, have five more tickets given out, and yesterday before I had dined three German barons came. My house is a torment, not a comfort!

I was sent for again to dine at Gunnersbury on Friday, and was forced to send to town for a dress-coat and a sword. There were the prince of Wales, the prince of Mecklenburg, the duke of Portland, lord Clanbrassil, lord and lady Clermont, lord and lady Southampton, lord Pelham, and Mrs. Howe. The prince of Mecklenburg went back to Windsor after coffee; and the prince and lord and lady Clermont to town after tea to hear some new French players at lady William Gordon's. The princess, lady Barrymore, and the rest of us, played three pools at commerce till ten. I am afraid I was tired and gaped. While we were at the dairy, the princess insisted on my making some verses on Gunnersbury. I pleaded being superannuated: She would not excuse me. I pro-

mised she should have an ode on her next birthday; which diverted the prince — but all would not do — So, as I came home, I made the following stanzas, and sent them to her breakfast next morning:

I.

In deathless odes for ever green
Augustus' laurels blow;
Nor e'er was grateful duty seen
In warmer strains to flow.

II.

Oh! why is Flaccus not alive,
Your favourite scene to sing?
To Gunnersbury's charms could give
His lyre immortal spring.

III.

As warm as his my zeal for you,
Great princess, could I show it:
But though you have a Horace too—
Ah, madam! he's no poet.

If they are but poor verses, consider I am sixty-nine, was half asleep, and made them almost extempore—and by command! However, they succeeded, and I received this gracious answer:

"I wish I had a name that could answer your pretty verses. Your yawning yesterday opened your vein for pleasing me; and I return you my

thanks, my good Mr. Walpole, and remain sincerely your friend,

AMELIA."

I think this is very genteel at seventy-five.

Do you know that I have bought the Jupiter Serapis as well as the Julio Clovio![1] Mr. * * * * assures me he has seen six of the hand, and not one of them so fine or so well preserved. I am glad sir Joshua Reynolds saw no more excellence in the Jupiter than in the Clovio; or the duke of Portland, I suppose, would have purchased it, as he has the vase for a thousand pounds. I would not change. I told sir W. Hamilton and the late duchess, when I never thought it would be mine, that I had rather have the head than the vase. I shall long for Mrs. Damer to make a bust to it, and then it will be still more valuable. I have deposited both the Illumination and the Jupiter in lady Di's cabinet, which is worthy of them —— And here my collection winds up—I will not purchase trumpery after such jewels. Besides, every thing is much dearer in old age, as one has less time to enjoy. Good-night!

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[1] At the sale of the duchess dowager of Portland.

To RICHARD GOUGH, Esq.[1]

Berkeley-square, June 21, 1786.

On coming to town yesterday upon business, I found, sir, your very magnificent and most valuable present, for which I beg you will accept my most grateful thanks. I am impatient to return to Twickenham, to read it tranquilly. As yet I have only had time to turn the prints over, and to read the preface; but I see already that it is both a noble and laborious work, and will do great honour both to you and to your country. Yet one apprehension it has given me—I fear not living to see the second part! Yet I shall presume to keep it unbound, not only till it is perfectly dry and secure, but, as I mean the binding should be as fine as it deserves, I should be afraid of not having both volumes exactly alike.—Your partiality, I doubt, sir, has induced you to insert a paper not so worthy of the public regard as the rest of your splendid performance. My letter to Mr. Cole, which I am sure I had utterly forgotten to have ever written, was a hasty indigested sketch, like the rest of my scribblings, and never calculated to lead such well-meditated and accurate works as yours. Having lived familiarly with Mr.

[1] The editor of Camden's Britannia.

Cole from our boyhood, I used to write to him carelessly on the occasions that occurred. As it was always on subjects of no importance, I never thought of enjoining secresy. I could not foresee that such idle communications would find a place in a great national work, or I should have been more attentive to what I said. Your taste, sir, I fear, has for once been misled, and I shall be sorry for having innocently blemished a single page. — Since your partiality (for such it certainly was) has gone so far, I flatter myself you will have retained enough to accept — not a retribution — but a trifling mark of my regard, in the little volume that accompanies this; in which you will find that another too favourable reader has bestowed on me more distinction than I could procure for myself, by turning my slight essay on gardening into the pure French of the last age; and, which is wonderful, has not debased Milton by French poetry — on the contrary, I think Milton has given a dignity to French poetry — nay, and harmony; both which I thought that language almost incapable of receiving. As I would wish to give all the value I can to my offering, I will mention that I have printed but 400 copies, half of which went to France; and as this is an age in which mere rarities are preferred to commoner things of intrinsic worth, as I have found by the ridiculous prices given for some of my insignificant publications, merely because they are scarce, I

hope, under the title of a kind of curiosity, my thin piece will be admitted into your library.—If you would indulge me so far, sir, when I might hope to see the second part, I would calculate how many more fits of the gout I may weather, and would be still more strict in my regimen. I hope at least that you will not wait for the engravers, but will accomplish the text for the sake of the world—in this I speak disinterestedly. Though you are much younger than I am, I would have your part of the work secure; engravers may always proceed, or be found—another author cannot. I have the honour to be, with great gratitude, sir,

Your much obliged and
obedient humble servant.

P. S. I add a little piece, which is also rare here; sir Horace Mann sent me four, and I beg your acceptance of one.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, August 29, 1786.

SINCE I received the honour of your lordship's last, I have been at Park-place for a few days. Lord and lady Frederick Campbell and Mrs. Damer were there. We went on the Thames to see the new bridge at Henley, and Mrs. Damer's

colossal masks. There is not a sight in the island more worthy of being visited. The bridge is as perfect as if bridges were natural productions, and as beautiful as if it had been built for Wentworth-castle; and the masks, as if the Romans had left them here. We saw them in a fortunate moment; for the rest of the time was very cold and uncomfortable, and the evenings as chill as many we have had lately. In short, I am come to think that the beginning of an old ditty, which passes for a collection of blunders, was really an old English pastoral, it is so descriptive of our climate:

> Three children sliding on the ice
> All on a summer's day——

I have been overwhelmed more than ever by visitants to my house. Yesterday I had count Oghinski, who was a pretender to the crown of Poland at the last election, and has been stripped of most of a vast estate. He had on a ring of the new king of Prussia — or I should have wished him joy on the death of one of the plunderers of his country.

It has long been my opinion that the out-pensioners of Bedlam are so numerous, that the shortest and cheapest way would be to confine in Moorfields the few that remain in their senses, who would then be safe; and let the rest go at large. They are the out-pensioners who are for

destroying poor dogs! The whole canine race never did half so much mischief as lord George Gordon; nor even worry hares, but when hallooed on by men. As it is a persecution of animals, I do not love hunting; and what old writers mention as a commendation makes me hate it the more, its being an image of war. Mercy on us! that destruction of any species should be a sport or a merit! What cruel unreflecting imps we are! Every body is unwilling to die, yet sacrifices the lives of others to momentary pastime, or to the still emptier vapour, fame! A hero or a sportsman who wishes for longer life is desirous of prolonging devastation. We shall be crammed, I suppose, with panegyrics and epitaphs on the king of Prussia — I am content that he can now have an epitaph. But, alas! the emperor will write one for him probably in blood! and, while he shuts up convents for the sake of population, will be stuffing hospitals with maimed soldiers, besides making thousands of widows! — I have just been reading a new published history of the colleges in Oxford by Anthony Wood, and there found a feature in a character that always offended me, that of archbishop Chicheley, who prompted Henry V. to the invasion of France, to divert him from squeezing the overgrown clergy. When that priest meditated founding All Souls, and " consulted his friends (who seem to have been honest men) what great matter of piety he had

best perform to God in his old age, he was advised by them to build an hospital for the wounded and sick soldiers, that daily returned from the wars then had in France;"—I doubt his grace's friends thought as I do of his artifice—"but," continues the historian, "*disliking those motions,* and valuing the welfare of the deceased more than the wounded and diseased, he resolved with himself to promote his design—which was, to have masses said for the king, queen, and himself, &c. while living, and for their souls when dead."—And that mummery the old foolish rogue thought more efficacious than ointments and medicines for the wretches he had made! And of the chaplains and clerks he instituted in that dormitory, one was to teach grammar, and another, prick-song.—How history makes one shudder and laugh by turns!—But I fear I have wearied your lordship with my idle declamation, and you will repent having commanded me to send you more letters; and I can only plead that I am

Your (perhaps too) obedient humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, October 29, 1786.

I WAS sorry not to be apprised of your intention of going to town, where I would have met you;

but I knew it too late, both as I was engaged, and as you was to return so soon. I mean to come to Park-place in a week or fortnight: but I should like to know what company you expect, or do not expect; for I had rather fill up your vacancies than be a supernumerary.

Lady Onslow has sent me two charades made by colonel Fitzpatrick: the first she says is very easy, the second very difficult. I have not come within sight of the easy one; and though I have a guess at the other, I do not believe I am right; and so I send them to you, who are master-general of the Œdipuses.

The first, that is so easy:

In concert, song, or serenade,
My first requires my second's aid.
To those residing near the pole
I would not recommend my whole.

The two last lines, I conclude, neither connect with the two first, nor will help one to deciphering them.

The difficult one:

Charades of all things are the worst,
But yet my best have been my first.
Who with my second are concern'd
Will to despise my whole have learn'd.

This sounds like a good one, and therefore I will not tell you my solution; for, if it is wrong,

it might lead you astray; and if it is right, it would prove the charade is not a good one.

Had I any thing better, I would not send you charades, unless for the name of the author.

I have had a letter from your brother, who tells me that he has his grandson S * * * with him, who is a prodigy. — I say to myself,

> —— Prodigies are grown so frequent,
> That they have lost their name ——

I have seen prodigies in plenty of late — aye, and formerly too — but, divine as they have all been, each has had a mortal heel, and has trodden back a vast deal of their celestial path! I beg to be excused from any more credulity.

I am sorry you have lost your fac-totum * * *. I suppose he had discovered that he was too necessary to you. Every day cures one of reliance on others; and we acquire a prodigious stock of experience by the time that we shall cease to have occasion for any. Well! I am not clear but making or solving charades is as wise as any thing we can do. I should pardon professed philosophers, if they would allow that their wisdom is only trifling, instead of calling their trifling wisdom. Adieu!

TO THE RT. HON. ELIZABETH LADY CRAVEN.[1]

Berkeley-square, Nov. 27, 1786.

To my extreme surprise, madam, when I knew not in what quarter of the known or unknown world you was resident or existent, my maid in Berkeley-square sent me to Strawberry-hill a note from your ladyship, offering to call on me for a moment — for a whirlwind, I suppose, was waiting at your door to carry you to Japan; and, as balloons have not yet settled any post-offices in the air, you could not, at least did not, give me any direction where to address you — though you did kindly reproach me with my silence. I must enter into a little justification before I proceed. I heard from you from Venice, then from Poland, and then, having whisked through Tartary, from Petersburgh—but still with no directions. I said to myself, "I will write to Grand Cairo, which, probably, will be her next stage." Nor was I totally in the wrong—for there came a letter from Constantinople, with a design mentioned of going to the Greek islands, and orders to write to you at Vienna, but with no banker or other address specified.

For a great while I had even stronger reasons

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[1] Afterwards margravine of Anspach.

than these for silence. For several months I was disabled by the gout from holding a pen; and you must know, madam, that one can't write when one cannot write. Then, how write to *la Fiancée du Roi de Garbe?* You had been in the tent of the cham of Tartary, and in the haram of the captain pacha, and, during your navigation of the Ægean, were possibly fallen into the terrible power of a corsair. How could I suppose that so many despotic infidels would part with your charms? I never expected you again on Christian ground. I did not doubt your having a talisman to make people in love with you; but anti-talismans are quite a new specific.

Well, while I was in this quandary, I received a delightful drawing of the castle of Otranto—but still provokingly without any address. However, my gratitude for so very agreeable and obliging a present could not rest till I found you out. I wrote to the duchess of Richmond, to beg she would ask your brother captain Berkeley for a direction to you; and he has this very day been so good as to send me one, and I do not lose a moment in making use of it.

I give your ladyship a million of thanks for the drawing, which was really a very valuable gift to me. I did not even know that there was a castle of Otranto. When the story was finished I looked into the map of the kingdom of Naples for a well-sounding name, and that of Otranto was very so-

norous. Nay, but the drawing is so satisfactory, that there are two small windows, one over another, and looking into the country, that suit exactly to the small chambers from one of which Matilda heard the young peasant singing beneath her. Judge how welcome this must be to the author; and thence judge, madam, how much you must have obliged him!

When you take another flight towards the bounds of the western ocean, remember to leave a direction. One cannot always shoot flying. Lord Chesterfield directed a letter to the late lord Pembroke, who was always swimming, "To the earl of Pembroke in the Thames, over against Whitehall." That was sure of finding him within a certain number of fathom; but your ladyship's longitude varies so rapidly, that one must be a good bowler indeed, to take one's ground so judiciously that by casting wide of the mark one may come in near to the jack.

I have the honour to be,

With gratitude and respect,

Your ladyship's most obliged humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 1, 1787.

Do not imagine, dear madam, that I pretend in the most distant manner to pay you for charming poetry with insipid prose; much less that I acquit a debt of gratitude for flattering kindness and friendship, by a meagre tale that does not even aim at celebrating you. No; I have but two motives for offering you the accompanying trifle:[1] the first, to prove that the moment I have finished any thing, *you* are of the earliest in my thoughts: the second, that, coming from my press, I wish it may be added to your Strawberry editions. It is so far from being designed for the public, that I have printed but forty copies; which I do not mention to raise its value, though it will with mere collectors, but lest you should lend it and lose it, when I may not be able to supply its place.

Christina, indeed, has some title to connection with you, both from her learning and her moral writings; as you are justly entitled to a lodging in her *Cité des Dames*, where I am sure her three patronesses would place you, as a favourite *elève* of some of their still more amiable sisters, who must at this moment be condoling with their un-

[1] Christine de Pise.

fortunate sister Gratitude, whose vagabond foundling has so basely disgraced her and herself. You fancied that Mrs. Y * * * was a spurious issue of a muse; and to be sure, with all their immortal virginity, the parish of Parnassus has been sadly charged with their bantlings: and as nobody knows the fathers, no wonder some of the misses have turned out woful reprobates!

I was very unlucky in not calling at Mrs. Vesey's the evening you was there for a moment; but I hope for better fortune soon, and will be much obliged to you if you will tell me when I may hope for that pleasure.

Your most grateful and faithful humble servant.

To LADY CRAVEN.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 2, 1787.

YOUR ladyship tells me that you have kept a journal of your travels—you know not when your friends at Paris will give you time to put it *au net*—that is, I conclude and hope, prepare it for the press. I do not wonder that those friends, whether talismanic or others, are so assiduous, if you indulge them; but unless they are of the former description, they are unpardonable, if they know what they interrupt—and deserve much more that you should wish they had fallen into a ditch, than the

poor gentlemen who sigh more to see you in sheets of holland than of paper. To me the mischief is enormous. How proud I should be to register a noble authoress of my own country, who has travelled over more regions and farther than any female in print! Your ladyship has visited those islands and shores, whence formerly issued those travelling sages and legislators who sought and imported wisdom, laws, and religion into Greece; and though we are so perfect as to want none of those commodities, the fame of those philosophers is certainly diminished when a fair lady has gone as far in quest of knowledge. You have gone in an age when travels are brought to a juster standard, by narrations being limited to truth.

Formerly the performers of the longest voyages destroyed half the merit of their expeditions, by relating not what they had, but had *not* seen; a sort of communication that they might have imparted without stirring a foot from home. Such exaggerations drew discredit on travels, till people would not believe that there existed in other countries any thing very different from what they saw in their own: and because no Patagonians, or gentry seven or eight feet high, were really discovered, they would not believe that there were Laplanders or pigmies of three and four. Incredulity went so far, that at last it was doubted whether China so much as existed; and our countryman sir John Mandeville got an ill name, because,

though he gave an account of it, he had not brought back its right name—at least, if I do not mistake, this was the case—But it is long since I read any thing about the matter; and I am willing to begin my travels again under your ladyship's auspices. I am sorry to hear, madam, that by your account lady Mary Wortley was not so accurate and faithful as modern travellers. The invaluable art of inoculation, which she brought from Constantinople, so dear to all admirers of beauty, and to which we owe perhaps the preservation of yours, stamps her an universal benefactress; and as you rival her in poetic talents, I had rather you would employ them to celebrate her for her nostrum, than detect her for romancing. However, genuine accounts of the interior of seraglios would be precious; and I was in hopes would become the greater rarities, as I flattered myself that your friends the empress of Russia and the emperor were determined to level Ottoman tyranny. His imperial majesty, who has demolished the prison bars of so many nunneries, would perform a still more Christian act in setting free so many useless sultanas; and her czarish majesty, I trust, would be as great a benefactress to our sex, by abolishing the barbarous practice that reduces us to be of none. Your ladyship's indefatigable peregrinations should have such great objects in view, when you have the car of sovereigns.

Peter the hermit conjured up the first crusadoes against the infidels by running about from monarch to monarch. Lady Craven should be as zealous and as renowned; and every fair Circassian would acknowledge that one English lady had repaid their country for the secret which another had given to Europe from their practice.

I have the honour to be, madam,
Your ladyship's most obedient humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 23, 1787.

Dear Madam,

I not only send you *la Cité des Dames*, but Christina's Life of Charles V. which will entertain you more, and which, when I wrote my brief history of her, I did not know she had actually composed. Mr. Dutens told me of it very lately, and actually borrowed it for me—and but yesterday my French bookseller sent me three-and-twenty other volumes of those *Memoires Historiques*,[1] which I had ordered him to get for me, and which will keep my eyes to the oar for some time, whenever

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[1] Collection des meilleurs ouvrages François composés par des femmes, by mademoiselle Keralio.

I have leisure to sail through such an ocean; and yet I shall embark with pleasure, late as it is for me to undertake such a hugeous voyage: —but a crew of old gossips are no improper company, and we shall sit in a warm cabin, and hear and tell old stories of past times.

Pray keep the volume as long as you please, and borrow as many more as you please, for each volume is a detached piece. Yet I do not suppose your friends will allow you much time for reading in town; and I hope I shall often be the better for their hindering you.

Yours most sincerely and most cordially.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 17, 1787.

I have very little to tell you since we met but disappointments, and those of no great consequence.

On Friday night lady Pembroke wrote to me that princess Lubomirski was to dine with her the next day, and desired to come in the morning to see Strawberry.—Well, my castle put on its robes, breakfast was prepared, and I shoved another company out of the house, who had a ticket for seeing it. The sun shone, my hay was cocked, we looked divinely—and at half an hour after

two nobody came but a servant from lady Pembroke, to say her Polish altitude had sent her word she had another engagement in town that would keep her too late: — so lady Pembroke's dinner was addled; and we had nothing to do, but, like good Christians, if we chose it, to compel every body on the road, whether they chose it or not, to come in and eat our soup and biscuits. Methinks this *liberum veto* was rather impertinent, and I begin to think that the partition of Poland was very right.

Your brother has sent me a card for a ball on Monday, but I have excused myself. I have not yet compassed the whole circuit of my own garden, and I have had an inflammation in one of my eyes, and don't think I look as well as my house and my verdure; and had rather see my hay-cocks, than the duchess of Polignac and madame Lubomirski. *The way to keep him* had the way to get me, and I could crawl to it, because I had an inclination; but I have a great command of myself when I have no mind to do any thing. Lady Constant was worth an hundred *acs* and *irskis*.

Let me hear of you when you have nothing else to do; though I suppose you have as little to tell as you see I had.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, July 28, 1787.

St. Swithin is no friend to correspondence, my dear lord. There is not only a great sameness in his own proceedings, but he makes every body else dull—I mean in the country, where one frets at its raining every day and all day. In town he is no more minded than the proclamation against vice and immorality. Still, though he has all the honours of the quarantine, I believe it often rained for forty days long before St. Swithin was born, if ever born he was; and the proverb was coined and put under his patronage, because people observed that it frequently does rain for forty days together at this season. I remember lady Suffolk telling me, that lord Dysart's great meadow had never been mowed but once in forty years without rain. I said, "all that that proved was, that rain was good for hay," as I am persuaded the climate of a country and its productions are suited to each other. Nay, rain is good for haymakers too, who get more employment the oftener the hay is made over again. I do not know who is the saint that presides over thunder; but he has made an unusual quantity in this chill summer, and done a great deal of serious mischief, though not a fiftieth part of what lord George Gordon did seven years ago—and happily he is fled.

Our little part of the world has been quiet as usual. The duke of Queensberry has given a sumptuous dinner to the princesse de Lambelle—*et voilà tout.* I never saw her, not even in France. I have no particular *penchant* for sterling princes and princesses, much less for those of French plate.

The only entertaining thing I can tell your lordship from our district is, that old madam French, who lives close by the bridge at Hampton-court, where, between her and the Thames, she had nothing but one grass-plot of the width of her house, has paved that whole plot with black and white marble in diamonds, exactly like the floor of a church; and this curious metamorphosis of a garden into a pavement has cost her three hundred and forty pounds: — a tarpaulin she might have had for some shillings, which would have looked as well, and might easily have been removed. To be sure this exploit, and lord Dudley's obelisk *below* a hedge, with his canal at right angles with the Thames, and a sham bridge no broader than that of a violin, and *parallel* to the river, are not preferable to the monsters in clipt yews of our ancestors;

Bad taste expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.

On the contrary, Mrs. Walsingham is making her house at Ditton (now baptized Boyle-farm) very

orthodox. Her daughter miss Boyle,[1] who has real genius, has carved three tablets in marble with boys designed by herself. Those sculptures are for a chimney-piece; and she is painting pannels in grotesque for the library, with pilasters of glass in black and gold. Miss Crewe, who has taste too, has decorated a room for her mother's house at Richmond, which was lady Margaret Compton's, in a very pretty manner. How much more amiable the old women of the next age will be, than most of those we remember, who used to tumble at once from gallantry to devout scandal and cards! and revenge on the young of their own sex the desertion of ours. Now they are ingenious, they will not want amusement.

Adieu, my dear lord!

I am most gratefully your lordship's very faithful humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, October 14, 1787.

My dear Madam,

I am shocked for human nature at the repeated malevolence of this woman!—The rank soil of

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[1] Afterwards married to lord Henry Fitzgerald.

riches we are accustomed to see overrun with weeds and thistles; but who could expect that the kindest seeds sown on poverty and dire misfortunes, should meet with nothing but a rock at bottom; Catherine de Medici, suckled by popes and transplanted to a throne, seems more excusable. Thank heaven, madam, for giving you so excellent a heart—aye, and so good a head. You are not only benevolence itself, but, with fifty times the genius of * * * *, you are void of vanity. How strange that vanity should expel gratitude! —Does not the wretched women owe her fame to you, as well as her affluence? I can testify your labours for both. Dame * * * * reminds me of the Troubadours, those vagrants whom I used to admire till I knew their history; and who used to pour out trumpery verses, and flatter or abuse accordingly as they were housed and clothed, or dismissed to the next parish:—Yet you did not set this person in the stocks, after procuring an annuity for her!

I beg your pardon for renewing so disgusting a subject, and will never mention it again. You have better amusement; you love good works; a temper superior to revenge.

I have again seen our poor friend in Clarges-street: her faculties decay rapidly; and of course she suffers less. She has not an acquaintance in town; and yet told me the town was very full, and that she had had a good deal of company.

Her health is re-established, and we must now be content that her mind is not restless. My pity now feels most for Mrs. Hancock,[1] whose patience is inexhaustible, though not insensible.

Mrs. Piozzi, I hear, has two volumes of Dr. Johnson's letters ready for publication. Bruce is printing his Travels; which I suppose will prove that his narratives were fabulous, as he will scarce repeat them by the press. These and two more volumes of Mr. Gibbon's History are all the literary news I know. France seems sunk indeed in all respects. What stuff are their theatrical goods, their Richards, Ninas, and Tarares! But when their Figaro could run threescore nights, how despicable must their taste be grown! I rejoice that their political intrigues are not more creditable. I do not dislike the French from the vulgar antipathy between neighbouring nations, but for their insolent and unfounded airs of superiority. In arms we have almost always outshone them: and till they have excelled Newton, and come near to Shakspeare, pre-eminence in genius must remain with us. I think they are most entitled to triumph over the Italians, as with the most meagre and inharmonious of all languages the French have made more of that poverty in tragedy and eloquence, than the Italians have done with the

[1] A lady who lived with Mrs. Vesey.

language the most capable of both——But I did not mean to send you a dissertation. I hope it will not be long before you remove to Hampton—Yet why should I wish that?—You will only be geographiically nearer to London till February.—Cannot you now and then sleep at the Adelphi on a visit to poor Vesey and your friends, and let one know if you do?

Yours, my dear madam, most sincerely.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 11, 1787.

FROM violent contrary winds,[1] and by your letter going to Strawberry-hill, whence I was come, I have but just received it, and perhaps shall only be able to answer it by snatches, being up to the chin in nephews and nieces. * * * *

I find you knew nothing of the pacification when you wrote. When I saw your letter, I hoped it would tell me you was coming back, as your island is as safe as if it was situated in the Pacific Ocean, or at least as islands there used to be, till sir Joseph Banks chose *to put them up.* I sent you the good news on the very day before

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[1] Mr. Conway was now in Jersey.

you wrote, though I imagined you would learn it by earlier intelligence. Well, I enjoy both your safety and your great success, which is enhanced by its being owing to your character and abilities. I hope the latter will be allowed to operate by those who have not quite so much of either.

I shall be wonderful glad to see little master Stonehenge[2] at Park-place: it will look in character there; but your own bridge is so stupendous in comparison, that hereafter the latter will be thought to have been a work of the Romans. Dr. Stukeley will burst his cerements to offer misletoe in your temple—and Mason, on the contrary, will die of vexation and spite that he cannot have Caractacus acted on the spot—— Peace to all such!—

> ——— but were there one whose fires
> True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,

he would immortalize you, for all you have been carrying on in Jersey, and for all you shall carry off. Inigo Jones, or Charlton, or somebody, I forget who, called Stonehenge "Chorea gigantum"

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[2] Mr. Walpole thus calls the small druidic temple discovered in Jersey, which the states of that island had presented to their governor general Conway to be transported to and erected at Park-place.

—this will be the chorea of the pigmies—and as I forget too what is Latin for Lilliputians, I will make a bad pun, and say,

——— portantur avari
Pygmalionis opes ———

Pygmalion is as well-sounding a name for such a monarch as Oberon.—Pray do not disappoint me, but transport the cathedral[3] of your island to your domain on our *continent.* I figure unborn antiquaries making pilgrimages to visit your bridge, your daughter's bridge,[4] and the druidic temple; and if I were not too old to have any imagination left, I would add a sequel to Mi Li.[5] Adieu!

To Mr. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, May 8, 1788.

Since your draftsman was with me, sir, I can give you a little better answer to your queries than I

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[3] The druidic temple.

[4] The key stones of the centre arch of the bridge at Henley are ornamented with heads of the Thames and Isis, designed by the Hon. Mrs. Damer, and executed by her in Portland stone.

[5] One of the Hieroglyphic Tales, containing a description of Park-place.

could then extempore, especially as I had then a person with me on business. I have since been at Strawberry-hill, and though I recollected a rude sketch of the head of Charles VI. in Vertue's MSS. I was so lucky as to find it, and enclose a still ruder sketch (for I never could draw well, and my lame fingers are still more incapable now.) The attire of the head is precisely the same with that of our fourth Henry. Vertue's account I have transcribed too.—I was very sure I had seen somewhere an account of Joan of Navarre being suspected by Henry V. I looked into Stow, Holinshed, and Hall. But they mention no such thing, nor can I recollect where I found it; but Rapin does touch on it briefly in the place I have set down. Still I am positive I have seen rather a fuller account of it, though I cannot recall where. I hope, sir, you received the letter in which I told you of my imperfect negotiation with lord Monson about the pictures at Broxbourne, which I sent the day before your draftsman was with me, and directed to you, as you ordered, at Enfield.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient humble servant.

To THOMAS BARRETT, Esq.[1]

Berkeley-square, June 5, 1788.

I WISH I could charge myself with any merit, which I always wish to have towards you, dear sir, in letting Mr. Matthew see Strawberry; but in truth he has so much merit and modesty and taste himself, that I gave him the ticket with pleasure—which it seldom happens to me to do; for most of those who go thither, go because it is the fashion, and because *a party* is a prevailing custom too; and my tranquillity is disturbed, because nobody likes to stay at home. If Mr. Matthew was really entertained, I am glad—but Mr. Wyatt has made him too correct a Goth not to have seen all the imperfections and bad execution of my attempts; for neither Mr. Bentley nor my workmen had *studied* the science, and I was always too desultory and impatient to consider that I should please myself more by allowing time, than by hurrying my plans into execution before they were ripe. My house therefore is but a sketch by beginners; yours is finished by a great master—and if Mr. Matthew liked mine, it was *en virtuose*, who loves the dawnings of an art, or the glimmerings of its restoration.

[1] Of Lee, in Kent.

I finished Mr. Gibbon a full fortnight ago, and was extremely pleased. It is a most wonderful mass of information, not only on history, but almost on all the ingredients of history, as war, government, commerce, coin, and what not. If it has a fault, it is in embracing too much, and consequently in not detailing enough, and in striding backwards and forwards from one set of princes to another, and from one subject to another; so that, without much historic knowledge, and without much memory, and much method in one's memory, it is almost impossible not to be sometimes bewildered: nay, his own impatience to tell what he knows, makes the author, though commonly so explicit, not perfectly clear in his expressions. The last chapter of the fourth volume, I own, made me recoil, and I could scarcely push through it. So far from being catholic or heretic, I wished Mr. Gibbon had never heard of Monophysites, Nestorians, or any such fools!—But the sixth volume made ample amends; Mahomet and the popes were gentlemen and good company.—I abominate fractions of theology and reformation.

Mr. Sheridan, I hear, did not quite satisfy the passionate expectation that had been raised.[2]——

[2] Of his speech in Westminster-hall, upon bringing forward one of the charges against Mr. Hastings.

But it was impossible he could, when people had worked themselves into an enthusiasm of offering fifty—aye, *fifty* guineas for a ticket to hear him. Well! we are sunk and deplorable in many points—yet not absolutely gone, when history and eloquence throw out such shoots! I thought I had outlived my country; I am glad not to leave it desperate! Adieu, dear sir!

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Tuesday night, June 17, 1788.

I GUESS, my dear lord, and only guess that you are arrived at Wentworth-castle. If you are not, my letter will lose none of its bloom by waiting for you; for I have nothing fresh to tell you, and only write because you enjoined it. I settled in my Lilliputian towers but this morning. I wish people would come into the country on May-day, and fix in town the first of November. But as they will not, I have made up my mind; and having so little time left, I prefer London, when my friends and society are in it, to living here alone, or with the weird sisters of Richmond and Hampton. I had additional reason now, for the streets are as green as the fields: we are burnt to the bone, and have not a lock of hay to cover our

nakedness: oats are so dear, that I suppose they will soon be eaten at Brooks's and fashionable tables as a rarity. The drought has lasted so long, that for this fortnight I have been foretelling hay-making and winter, which June generally produces; but to-day is sultry, and I am not a prophet worth a straw. Though not resident till now, I have flitted backwards and forwards, and last Friday came hither to look for a minute at a ball at Mrs. Walsingham's at Ditton; which would have been very pretty, for she had stuck coloured lamps in the hair of all her trees and bushes, if the east wind had not danced a reel all the time by the side of the river.

Mr. Conway's play,[1] of which your lordship has seen some account in the papers, has succeeded delightfully, both in representation and applause. The language is most genteel, though translated from verse; and both prologue and epilogue are charming. The former was delivered most justly and admirably by lord Derby, and the latter with inimitable spirit and grace by Mrs. Damer. Mr. Merry and Mrs. Bruce played excellently too.—But general Conway, Mrs. Damer, and every body else are drowned by Mr. Sheridan, whose renown

[1] A comedy translated from L'Homme du Jour of Boissy. It was first acted at the private theatre at Richmond-house, and afterwards at Drury-lane.

has engrossed all fame's tongues and trumpets.[2] Lord Townshend said he should be sorry were he forced to give a vote directly on Hastings, before he had time to cool; and one of the peers saying the speech had not made the same impression on him, the marquis replied, a seal might be finely cut, and yet not be in fault for making a bad impression.

I have, you see, been forced to send your lordship what scraps I brought from town: the next four months, I doubt, will reduce me to my old sterility; for I cannot retail French gazettes, though as a good Englishman bound to hope they will contain a civil war. I care still less about the double imperial campaign, only hoping that the poor dear Turks will heartily beat both emperor and empress. If the first Ottomans could be punished, they deserved it — but the present possessors have as good prescription on their side as any people in Europe. We ourselves are Saxons, Danes, Normans — our neighbours are Franks, not Gauls — who the rest are, Goths, Gepidæ, Heruli, Mr. Gibbon knows — and the Dutch usurped the estates of herrings, turbots, and other marine indigenæ. — Still, though I do not wish the hair of a

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2 From the speech he made in Westminster-hall, on bringing the charge of cruelty to the Begums of the province of Benares, in the trial of Mr. Hastings.

Turk's beard to be hurt, I do not say that it would not be amusing to have Constantinople taken — merely as a lusty event — for neither could I live to see Athens revive, nor have I much faith in two such bloody-minded vultures, cock and hen, as Catherine and Joseph, conquering for the benefit of humanity; nor does my christianity admire the propagation of the gospel by the mouth of cannon. What desolation of peasants and their families by the episodes of forage and quarters! — Oh! I wish Catherine and Joseph were brought to Westminster-hall and worried by Sheridan! I hope too, that the poor Begums are alive to hear of his speech — it will be some comfort, though I doubt nobody thinks of restoring them a quarter of a lac!

Adieu, my dear lord!

Yours most faithfully.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, July 4, 1788.

I am soundly rejoiced, my dear madam, that the present summer is more favourable to me than the last; and that, instead of not answering my letters in three months, you open the campaign first. — May not I flatter myself that it is a symptom of your being in better health? I wish however you

had told me so in positive words, and that all your complaints have left you. Welcome as is your letter, it would have been ten times more welcome bringing me that assurance; for don't think I forget how ill you was last winter. As letters, you say, now keep their coaches,[1] I hope those from Bristol will call often at my door. I promise you I will never be denied to them.

No botanist am I; nor wished to learn from *you* of all the muses that *piping* has a new signification. I had rather that *you* handled an oaten pipe than a carnation one—yet setting layers, I own, is preferable to reading newspapers, one of the chronical maladies of this age.—Every body reads them, nay quotes them, though every body knows they are stuffed with lies or blunders.—How should it be otherwise? If any extraordinary event happens, who but must hear it before it descends through a coffee house to the runner of a daily paper? They who are always wanting news, are wanting to hear they don't know what. A lower species indeed is that of the scribes you mention, who every night compose a journal for the satisfaction of such *illiterati*, and feed them with all the vices and misfortunes of every private family —nay, they now call it a *duty* to publish all those calamities which decency to wretched relations

[1] Meaning the establishment of the mail-coach.

used in compassion to suppress — I mean self-murder in particular. Mr. * * * *'s was detailed at length; and to-day that of lord * * * * * and * * * * *. The pretence is, *in terrorem*, like the absurd stake and highway of our ancestors; as if there were a precautionary potion for madness, or the stigma of a newspaper were more dreadful than death. Daily journalists, to be sure, are most respectable magistrates! Yes, much like the cobblers that Cromwell made peers.

I do lament your not going to Mr. Conway's play: both the author and actors deserved such an auditor as you, and you deserved to hear them. — However, I do not pity *good* people, who out of virtue lose or miss any pleasures. Those pastimes fleet as fast as those of the wicked; but when gone, you saints can sit down and feast on your self-denial, and drink bumpers of satisfaction to the health of your own merit— So truly I don't pity you.

You say you hear no news, yet you quote Mr. Topham; therefore why should I tell you that the king is going to Cheltenham? or that the Baccelli lately danced at the opera at Paris with a blue bandeau on her forehead, incribed, *Honi soit qui mal y pense?* — Now who can doubt but she is as pure as the countess of Salisbury?[2] Was

[2] The countess of Salisbury, to the fall of whose garter has been attributed the foundation of the order of the Garter.

not it ingenious? and was not the embassador so to allow it? — No doubt he took it for a compliment to his own knee.

Well! would we committed nothing but follies! What do we not commit when the abolition of slavery hitches!

> Though Cato died, though Tully spoke,
> Though Brutus dealt the god-like stroke,
> Yet perish'd fated Rome!—

You have written; and I fear that even if Mr. Sheridan speaks, trade, the modern religion, will predominate. Adieu, my dear madam!

Yours most sincerely.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, July 12, 1788.

Won't you repent having opened the correspondence, my dear madam, when you find my letters come so thick upon you? In this instance, however, I am only to blame in part, for being too ready to take advice, for the sole reason for which advice ever is taken, because it fell in with my inclination.

You said in your last that you feared you took up time of mine to the prejudice of the public; implying, I imagine, that I might employ it in

composing. Waving both your compliment and my own vanity, I will speak very seriously to you on that subject, and with exact truth. My simple writings have had better fortune than they had any reason to expect; and I fairly believe, in a great degree, because gentlemen-writers, who do not write for interest, are treated with some civility if they do not write absolute nonsense. I think so, because I have not unfrequently known much better works than mine much more neglected, if the name, fortune, and situation of the authors were below mine. I wrote early, from youth, spirits, and vanity, and from both the last when the first no longer existed. I now shudder when I reflect on my own boldness; and with mortification, when I compare my own writings with those of any great authors. This is so true, that I question whether it would be possible for me to sum up courage to publish any thing I have written, if I could recall time past, and should yet think as I think at present.——So much for what is over and out of my power. As to writing now, I have totally forsworn the profession, for two solid reasons. One I have already told you, and it is, that I know my own writings are trifling and of no depth. The other is, that, light and futile as they were, I am sensible they are better than I could compose now. I am aware of the decay of the middling parts I had, and others may be still more sensible of it. How do I know but I am

superannuated? Nobody will be so coarse as to tell me so — but if I published dotage, all the world would tell me so. — And who but runs that risk who is an author after seventy? What happened to the greatest author of this age, and who certainly retained a very considerable portion of his abilities for ten years after my age? Voltaire, at 84 I think, went to Paris to receive the incense, in person, of his countrymen, and to be witness of their admiration of a tragedy he had written at that Methusalem-age. Incense he did receive till it choked him; and at the exhibition of his play he was actually crowned with laurel in the box where he sat —— But what became of his poor play? — It died as soon as he did — was buried with him — and no mortal, I dare to say, has ever read a line of it since, it was so bad.

As I am neither by a thousandth part so great, nor a quarter so little, I will herewith send you a fragment that an accidental rencontre set me upon writing, and which I found so flat, that I would not finish it. Don't believe that I am either begging praise by the stale artifice of hoping to be contradicted; or that I think there is any occasion to make you discover my caducity. No; but the fragment contains a curiosity — English verses written by a French prince of the blood, and which at first I had a mind to add to my Royal and Noble Authors; but as he was not a Royal author of ours, and as I could not please myself

with an account of him, I shall revert to my old resolution of not exposing my pen's gray hairs.

Of one passage I must take notice; it is a little indirect sneer at our crowd of authoresses. My choosing to send this to *you* is a proof that I think you an author, that is, a classic. But in truth I am nauseated by the madams * * * *, &c. and the host of novel-writers in petticoats, who think they imitate what is inimitable, Evelina and Cecilia. Your candour I know will not agree with me, when I tell you I am not at all charmed with miss * * * * and Mr. * * * * * piping to one another; but *you* I exhort, and would encourage to write; and flatter myself you will never be royally gagged and promoted to fold muslins, as has been lately wittily said on miss B * * *, in the list of 500 living authors. *Your* writings promote virtues; and their increasing editions prove their worth and utility.—If you question my sincerity, can you doubt my admiring you, when you have gratified my self-love so amply in your *Bas-bleu?* Still, as much as I love your writings, I respect yet more your heart and your goodness. You are so good, that I believe you would go to heaven, even though there were no Sunday, and only six *working* days in the week. Adieu, my best madam!

Yours most cordially.

P. S. On recollection, I doubt I have before given you the same reasons for my lying fallow

that I have in this letter. If so, why it is like an old man to repeat himself—but at least I will not do so in print.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, August 2, 1788.

MATTER for a letter, alas! my dear lord, I have none—but *about* letters I have great news to tell your lordship, only may the goddess of post-offices grant it be true! A miss S * * * * of Richmond, who is at Paris, writes to Mrs. B * * *.* *, that a baron de la Garde (I am sorry there are so many *a*'s in the genealogy of my story) has found in a *vieille armoire* five hundred more letters of madame de Sevigné, and that they will be printed, if the expense is not too great. I am in a taking lest they should not appear before I set out for the Elysian fields; for though the writer is one of the first personages I should inquire after on my arrival, I question whether St. Peter has taste enough to know where she lodges: he is more likely to be acquainted with St. Catherine of Sienna and St. Undecimillia; and therefore I had rather see the letters themselves. It is true I have no small doubt of the authenticity of the legend; and nothing will persuade me of its truth so much as the non-appearance of the letters — a melancholy kind of conviction. But I vehemently suspect

some new coinage, like the leters of Ninon de l'Enclos, pope Ganganelli, and the princess Palatine. I have lately been reading some fragments of letters of the duchess of Orleans, which are certainly genuine, and contain some curious circumstances; for though she was a simple gossiping old gentlewoman, yet many little facts she could not help learning: and to give her her due, she was ready to tell all she knew. To our late queen she certainly did write often; and her majesty, then only princess, was full as ready to pay her in her own coin, and a pretty considerable treaty of commerce for the exchange of scandal was faithfully executed between them; insomuch that I remember to have heard forty years ago, that our gracious sovereign entrusted her royal highness of Orleans with an intrigue of one of her women of the bed-chamber, Mrs. S * * * to wit; and the good duchess entrusted it to so many other dear friends, that at last it got into the Utrecht Gazette, and came over hither, to the signal edification of the court of Leicester-fields. This is an additional reason, besides the internal evidence, for my believing the letters genuine. This old dame was mother of the regent; and when she died, somebody wrote on her tomb, *Cy gist l'Oisiveté.* This came over too; and nobody could expound it, till our then third princess, Caroline, unravelled it — Idleness is the mother of all vice.

I wish well enough to posterity to hope that dowager highnesses will imitate the practice, and write all the trifles that occupy their royal brains; for the world so at least learns some true history, which their husbands never divulge; especially if they are privy to their own history, which their ministers keep from them as much as possible. I do not believe the present king of France knows much more of what he, or rather his queen, is actually doing, than I do. I rather pity him; for I believe he means well, which is not a common article of my faith.

I shall go about the end of this week to Park-place, where I expect to find the druidic temple from Jersey erected. How dull will the world be, if constant pilgrimages are not made thither! where, besides the delight of the scenes, that temple, the rude great arch, lady Ailesbury's needle-works, and Mrs. Damer's Thame and Isis on Henley-bridge, with other of her sculptures, make it one of the most curious spots in the island, and unique. I want to have Mr. Conway's comedy acted there; and then the father, mother, and daughter would exhibit a theatre of arts as uncommon. How I regret that your lordship did not hear Mrs. Damer speak the epilogue!

I am, my dear lord,

Your lordship's

most faithful humble servant.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, September 12, 1788.

My late fit of gout, though very short, was a very authentic one, my dear lord, and the third I have had since Christmas. Still, of late years, I have suffered so little pain, that I can justly complain of nothing but the confinement and the debility of my hands and feet, which however I can still use to a certain degree; and as I enjoy such good spirits and health in the intervals, I look upon the gout as no enemy: yet I know it is like the compacts said to be made with the devil (no kind comparison to a friend!) who showers his favours on the contractors, but is sure to seize and carry them off at last.

I would not say so much of myself, but in return to your lordship's obliging concern for me — yet, insignificant as the subject, I have no better in bank — and if I plume myself on the tolerable state of my outward man, I doubt your lordship finds that age does not treat my interior so mildly as the gout does the other. If my letters, as you are pleased to say, used to amuse you, you must perceive how insipid they are grown, both from my decays, and from the little intercourse I have with the world. Nay, I take care not to aim at false vivacity: what do the attempts of age at liveliness prove but its weakness? What the

Spectator said wittily, ought to be practised in sober sadness by old folks: when he was dull, he declared it was by design. So far, to be sure, we ought to observe it, as not to affect more spirits than we possess. To be purposely stupid, would be forbidding our correspondents to continue the intercourse; and I am so happy in enjoying the honour of your lordship's friendship, that I will be content (if you can be so) with my natural inanity, without studying to increase it.

I have been at Park-place, and assure your lordship that the Druidic temple vastly more than answers my expectation. Small it is, no doubt, when you are within the enclosure, and but a chapel of ease to Stonehenge; but Mr. Conway has placed it with so much judgment, that it has a lofty effect, and infinitely more than it could have had, if he had yielded to Mrs. Damer's and my opinion, who earnestly begged to have it placed within the enclosure of the home-grounds. It now stands on the ridge of the high hill without, backed by the horizon, and with a grove on each side at a little distance; and being exalted beyond and above the range of firs that climb up the sides of the hill from the valley, wears all the appearance of an ancient castle, whose towers are only shattered, not destroyed; and devout as I am to old castles, and small taste as I have for the ruins of ages absolutely barbarous, it is impossible not to be pleased with so very rare an antiquity so

absolutely perfect, and it is difficult to prevent visionary ideas from improving a prospect.

If, as lady Anne Conolly told your lordship, I have had a great deal of company, you must understand it of my house, not of me; for I have very little. Indeed, last Monday both my house and I were included. The duke of York sent me word the night before, that he would come and see it, and of course I had the honour of showing it myself. He said, and indeed it seemed so, that he was much pleased; at least, I had every reason to be satisfied; for I never saw any prince more gracious and obliging, nor heard one utter more personally kind speeches.

I do not find that *her grace* the countess of Bristol's[1] will is really known yet. They talk of two wills — to be sure, in her double capacity; and they say she has made three coheiresses to her jewels, the empress of Russia, lady Salisbury, and the whore of Babylon. The first of those legatees, I am not sorry, is in a piteous scrape: I like the king of Sweden no better than I do her and the emperor: but it is good that two destroyers should be punished by a third, and that two crocodiles should be gnawed by an insect. Thank God! *we* are not only at peace, but in full plenty — nay, and in full beauty too. Still better;

[1] The duchess of Kingston.

though we have had rivers of rain, it has not, contrary to all precedent, washed away our warm weather. September, a month I generally dislike for its irresolute mixture of warm and cold, has hitherto been peremptorily fine. The apple and walnut trees bend down with fruit, as in a poetic description of Paradise.

I am with great gratitude, my dear lord,
Your lordship's
devoted humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 22, 1788.

I don't like to defraud you of your compassion, my good friend, profuse as you are of it. I really suffered scarce any pain at all from my last fit of gout. I have known several persons who think there is a dignity in complaining; and, if you ask how they do, reply — Why — I *am* — pretty well —to-day; but if you knew what I suffered *yesterday!* — Now methinks nobody has a right to tax another for pity on what is past; and besides, complaint of what is over can only make the hearer glad you are in pain no longer. Yes, yes, my dear madam, you generally place your pity so profitably, that you shall not waste a drop upon

me, who ought rather to be congratulated on being so well at my age.

Much less shall I allow you to make apologies for your admirable and proper conduct towards your poor *protegée*. And now you have told me the behaviour of a certain great dame, I will confess to you that I have known it some months by accident — nay, and tried to repair it. I prevailed on lady * * * * *, who as readily undertook the commission, and told the countess of her treatment of you. — Alas! the answer was, "It is too late; I have no money." — No! but she has, if she has a diamond left. I am indignant — yet, do you know, not at this duchess, or that countess, but at the invention of ranks, and titles, and pre-eminence. I used to hate that king and t'other prince — but, alas! on reflection I find the censure ought to fall on human nature in general. They are made of the same stuff as we, and dare we say what we should be in their situation? Poor creatures! think how they are educated, or rather, corrupted early, how flattered! — To be educated properly, they should be led through hovels, and hospitals, and prisons. Instead of being reprimanded (and perhaps immediately after *sugar-plum'd*) for not learning their Latin or French grammar, they now and then should be kept fasting, and if they cut their finger, should have no plaister till it festered. No part of a royal brat's memory, which is good enough, should be burthened but with the

remembrance of human sufferings. In short, I fear our nature is so liable to be corrupted and perverted by greatness, rank, power, and wealth, that I am inclined to think that virtue is the compensation to the poor for the want of riches — nay, I am disposed to believe, that the first foot-pad or highwayman had been a man of quality, or a prince, who could not bear having wasted his fortune, and was too lazy to work; for a beggar-born would think labour a more natural way of getting a livelihood than venturing his life. I have something a similar opinion about common women. No modest girl thinks of many men, till she has been in love with *one*, been ruined by him, and abandoned. —— But to return to my theme — and it will fall heavy on yourself — Could the milk-woman have been so bad, if you had merely kept her from starving, instead of giving her opulence? The soil, I doubt, was bad; but it could not have produced the rank weed of ingratitude, if you had not dunged it with gold, which rises from rock, and seems to meet with a congenial bed when it falls on the human heart.

And so Dr. Warton imagines I am writing Walpoliana! — No, in truth, nor any thing else, nor shall — nor will I go out in a jest-book. Age has not only made me prudent, but, luckily, lazy — and without the latter extinguisher, I do not know but that farthing candle my discretion would let my snuff of life flit to the last sparkle

of folly, like what children call the parson and clerk in a bit of burnt paper. You see by my *writability* in pressing my letters on you, that my pen has still a colt's tooth left; but I never indulge the poor old child with more paper than this small-sized sheet — I do not give it enough to make a paper kite and fly abroad on wings of booksellers. *You* ought to continue writing, for you do good by your writings, or at least mean it; and if a virtuous intention fails, it is a sort of coin, which, though thrown away, still makes the donor worth more than he was before he gave it away. I delight too in the temperature of your piety, and that you would not see the enthusiastic exorcist. How shocking to suppose that the Omnipotent Creator of worlds delegates his power to a momentary insect to eject supernatural spirits that he had permitted to infest another insect, and had permitted to vomit blasphemies against himself!— Pray do not call *that* enthusiasm, but delirium.—I pity real enthusiasts, but I would shave their heads and take away some blood. The exorcist's associates are in a worse predicament, I doubt, and hope to *make* enthusiasts. If such abominable impostors were not rather a subject of indignation, I could smile at the rivalship between them and the animal magnetists, who are inveigling fools into their different pales — And alas! while folly has a shilling left, there will be enthusiasts and

quack doctors, and there will be slaves while there are kings or sugar-planters. I have remarked, that though Jesuits, &c. travel to distant East and West to propagate their religion and traffic, I never heard of one that made a journey into Asia or Africa to preach the doctrines of liberty, though those regions are so deplorably oppressed. Nay, I much doubt whether ever any chaplain of the regiments we have sent to India has once whispered to a native of Bengal, that there are milder forms of government than those of his country — No; security of property is not a wholesome doctrine to be inculcated in a land where the soil produces diamonds and gold! — In short, if your Bristol exorcist believes he can cast out devils, why does he not go to Leadenhall-street? There is a company whose name is legion.

By your *gambols*, as you call them, after the most ungamboling peeress in christendom, and by your jaunts, I conclude to my great satisfaction that you are quite well. Change of scene and air are good for your spirits; and September, like all our old ladies, has given itself May airs, and must have made your journey very pleasant — Yet you will be glad to get back to your Cowslip-green, though it may offer you nothing but Michaelmas daisies. When you do leave it, I wish you could persuade Mrs. Garrick to settle sooner in London. There is full as good hay to be made in town at

Christmas as at Hampton, and some hay-makers that will wish for you, particularly

Your most sincere friend.

TO LADY CRAVEN.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 11, 1788.

IT is agreeable to your ladyship's usual goodness to honour me with another letter—and I may say to your equity too, after I had proved to monsieur Mercier, by the list of dates of my letters, that it was not mine but the post's fault, that you did not receive one that I had the honour of writing to you above a year ago—Not, madam, that I could wonder, if you had the prudence to drop a correspondence with an old superannuated man, who, conscious of his decay, has had the decency of not troubling with his dotages persons of not near your ladyship's youth and vivacity. I have long been of opinion that few persons know *when* to die—I am not so English as to mean when to dispatch themselves—no, but when to go out of the world. I have usually applied this opinion to those who have made a considerable figure, and consequently it was not adapted to myself. Yet even we cyphers ought not to fatigue the public scene when we are become lumber. Thus, being quite out of the question, I will explain my maxim,

which is the more wholesome, the higher it is addressed. My opinion then is, that when any personage has shown as much as is possible in his or her best walk (and not to repeat both genders every minute, I will use the male as the common of the two), he should take up his Strulbrugism, and be heard of no more. Instances will be still more explanatory. Voltaire ought to have pretended to die after Alzire, Mahomet, and Semiramis, and not have produced his wretched last pieces. Lord Chatham should have closed his political career with his immortal war — And how weak was Garrick, when he had quitted the stage, to limp after the tatters of fame by writing and reading pitiful poems, and even by *sitting* to read plays which he had acted with such fire and energy? — We have another example in Mr. Anstey; who, if he had a friend upon earth, would have been obliged to him for being knocked on the head the moment he had published the *first* edition of the Bath Guide; for even in the second he had exhausted his whole stock of inspiration, and has never written any thing tolerable since. When such unequal authors print their works together, one may apply in a new light the old hacked simile of Mezentius, who tied together the living and the dead.

We have just received the works of an author from whom I find I am to receive much less entertainment than I expected, because I shall have much less to read than I intended. His Memoirs,

I am told, are almost wholly military, which, therefore, I shall not read — and his poetry, I am sure, I shall not look at, because I should understand it.—What I saw of it formerly convinced me that he would not have been a poet, even if he had written in his own language; and though I do not understand German, I am told it is a fine language; and I can easily believe that any tongue (not excepting our old barbarous Saxon, which, a bit of an antiquary as I am, I abhor) is more harmonious than French. It was curious absurdity, therefore, to pitch on the most unpoetic language in Europe, the most barren, and the most clogged with difficulties. I have heard Russian and Polish sung, and both sounded musical —but to abandon one's own tongue, and not adopt Italian, that is even sweeter and softer and more copious than the Latin, was a want of taste that I should think could not be applauded even by a Frenchman born in Provence. But what a language is the French, which measures verses by feet that never are to be pronounced, which is the case wherever the mute *e* is found! What poverty of various sounds for rhyme, when, lest similar cadences should too often occur, their mechanic bards are obliged to marry masculine and feminine terminations as alternately as the black and white squares of a chess-board! Nay, will you believe me madam? Yes, you will; for you may convince your own eyes, that a scene of

Zaire begins with three of the most nasal adverbs that ever snorted together in a breath. *Enfin, donc, deformais*, are the culprits in question. *Enfin donc*, need I tell your ladyship, that the author I alluded to at the beginning of this long tirade is the late king of Prussia.

I am conscious that I have taken a little liberty when I excommunicate a tongue in which your ladyship has condescended to write — but I only condemn it for verse and pieces of eloquence, of which I thought it alike incapable, till I read Rousseau of Geneva. It is a most sociable language, and charming for narrative and epistles. Yet, write as well as you will in it, you must be liable to express yourself better in the speech natural to you; and your own country has a right to understand all your works, and is jealous of their not being as perfect as you could make them. Is it not more creditable to be translated into a foreign language than into your own? and will it not vex you to hear the translation taken for the original, and to find vulgarisms that you could not have committed yourself? But I have done, and will release you, madam; only observing, that you flatter me with a vain hope when you tell me you shall return to England some time or other. Where will that time be for me? — and when it arrives, shall not I be somewhere else?

I do not pretend to send your ladyship English news, nor to tell you of English literature. You

must before this time have heard of the dismal state into which our chief personage is fallen! That consideration absorbs all others. The two houses are going to settle some intermediate succedaneum, and *the obvious one*, no doubt, will be fixed on.

This letter, I hope, will be more fortunate than my last. I should be very unhappy to seem again ungrateful, when I have the honour of being with the greatest respect,

Madam,

Your ladyship's most obliged
and most humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, April 22, 1789.

Dear Madam,

As perhaps you have not yet seen the *Botanic Garden* (which I believe I mentioned to you), I lend it you to read. The poetry, I think, you will allow most admirable; and difficult it was no doubt. If you are not a naturalist, as well as a poetess, perhaps you will lament that so powerful a talent has been wasted to so little purpose; for where is the use of describing in verse what nobody can understand without a long prosaic explanation of every article? It is still more un-

fortunate that there is not a symptom of plan in the whole poem. The lady flowers and their lovers enter in pairs or trios, or &c. as often as the couples in Cassandra, and you are not a whit more interested about one heroine and her swain than about another. The similes are beautiful, fine, and sometimes sublime: and thus the episodes will be better remembered than the mass of the poem itself, which one cannot call *the subject;* for could one call it a subject, if any body had composed a poem on the matches formerly made in the Fleet, where, as Waitwell says, in The Way of the World, they stood like couples in rows ready to begin a country dance? — Still, I flatter myself, you will agree with me that the author is a great poet, and could raise the passions, and possesses all the requisites of the art. I found but a single bad verse: in the last canto one line ends *e'er long.*

You will perhaps be surprised at meeting a Truffle converted into a nymph, and inhabiting a palace studded with emeralds and rubies like a saloon in the Arabian Nights!

I had a more particular motive for sending this poem to *you:* you will find the bard espousing your poor Africans. There is besides, which will please you too, a handsome panegyric on *the apostle of humanity*, Mr. Howard.

Mrs. Garrick, whom I had the pleasure of meeting in her own box at Mr. Conway's play, gave me a much better account of your health,

which delighted me. I am sure, my good friend, you partake of my joy at the great success of his comedy. The additional character of the abbé pleased much — It was added by the advice of the players to enliven it — that is, to stretch the jaws of the pit and galleries. — I sighed silently; for it was originally so genteel and of a piece, that I was sorry to have it tumbled by coarse applauses — But this is a secret.

I am going to Twickenham for two days on an assignation with the Spring, and to avoid the riotous devotion of to-morrow.

A gentleman essayist has printed what he calls some strictures on my Royal and Noble Authors, in revenge for my having spoken irreverently (on bishop Burnet's authority) of the earl of Anglesey, who had the honour, it seems, of being the gentleman's grandfather. He asks me, by the way, why it was more ridiculous in the duke of Newcastle to write his two comedies, than in the duke of Buckingham to write The Rehearsal? — Alas! I know but one reason; which is, that it is less ridiculous to write one excellent comedy, than two very bad ones. Peace be with such answerers! Adieu, my dear madam!

Yours most cordially.

To Mr. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, May 28, 1789.

Mr. Walpole is extremely ashamed of receiving so magnificent a present from Mr. Gough, and yet thinks it would be a want of the respect and gratitude he owes him, not to accept it with a thousand thanks, and with the admiration it deserves, and to which the voice of the public will certainly give its deserved praise, and in which Mr. Gough's well known judgment and accuracy is not likely to have left any errors, and none, Mr. Walpole is very sure, that he is capable of finding. Mr. Walpole begs pardon of Mr. Gough for not thanking him with his own hand; but has been very ill with the gout for this month, and is not yet able to write himself.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, June 23, 1789.

Madam Hannah,

You are an errant reprobate, and grow wickeder and wickeder every day. You deserve to be treated like a *negre;* and your favourite Sunday, to which you are so partial that you treat the

other poor six days of the week as if they had no souls to be saved, should, if I could have my will,

——— shine no Sabbath-day for you.

Now, don't simper, and look as innocent as if virtue would not melt in your mouth — Can you deny the following charges?

I lent you The Botanic Garden, and you returned it without writing a syllable, or saying where you were or whither you was going — I suppose for fear I should know how to direct to you. — Why, if I did send a letter after you, could not you keep it three months without an answer, as you did last year?

In the next place, you and your *nine* accomplices, who by the way are too good in keeping you company, have clubbed the prettiest[1] poem imaginable, and communicated it to Mrs. Boscawen, with injunctions not to give a copy of it — I suppose, because you are ashamed of having written a panegyric. — Whenever you *do* compose a satire, you are ready enough to publish it — at least whenever you do, you will din one to death with it — But now, mind your perverseness: that very pretty novel poem, and I must own it is charming, have you gone and spoiled, flying in the faces of

[1] Bonner's Ghost.

your best friends the muses, and keeping no *measures* with them.—I'll be shot if they dictated two of the best lines with two syllables too much in each — nay, you have weakened one of them —

Ev'n Gardiner's mind

is far more expressive than *steadfast* Gardiner's — and, as Mrs. Boscawen says, whoever knows any thing of Gardiner, could not want that superfluous epithet — and whoever does not, would not be the wiser for your foolish insertion — Mrs. Boscawen did not call it foolish, but I do.

The second line, as mesdemoiselles the muses handed it to you, miss, was,

And all be free and saved—

Not, *All be free and all be saved:* the second *all be* is a most unnecessary tautology. The poem was perfect and faultless, if you could have let it alone. I wonder how your mischievous flippancy could help maiming that most new and beautiful expression, *sponge of sins* — I should not have been surprised, as you love verses too full of feet, if you had changed it to *that scrubbing-brush of sins.*

Well! I will say no more now: but if you do not order me a copy of Bonner's Ghost incontinently, never dare to look my printing-house in the face again — Or come, I'll tell you what; I will forgive all your enormities, if you will let me print your poem. I like to filch a little immorta-

lity out of others, and the Strawberry press could never have a better opportunity. I will not haggle for the public — I will be content with printing only two hundred copies, of which you shall have half, and I half. It shall cost you nothing but a Yes. I only propose this, in case you do not mean to print it yourself. Tell me sincerely which you like — But as to not printing it at all, charming and unexceptionable as it is, you cannot be so preposterous.

I by no means have a thought of detracting from your own share in your own poem; but, as I do suspect that it caught some inspiration from your perusal of the Botanic Garden, so I hope you will discover that *my* style is much improved by having lately studied * * * *'s travels — There I dipped, and not in St. Giles' pound, where one would think this author had been educated. Adieu!

Your friend, or mortal foe, as you behave on the present occasion.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, July 2, 1789.

I almost think I shall never abuse you again — nay, I would not, did not it prove so extremely

good for you. No walnut-tree is better for being threshed than you are; and though you have won my heart by your compliance, I don't know whether my conscience will not insist on my using you ill now and then; for is there any precedent for gratitude not giving way to every other duty? Gratitude, like an earl's eldest son, is but titular, and has no place upon *trials*——But I fear I am punning sillily, instead of thanking you seriously, as I do, for allowing me to print your lovely verses. My press can confer no honour; but, when I offer it, it is a certain mark of my sincerity and esteem. It has been dedicated to friendship, to charity—too often to worthless self-love; sometimes to the rarity of the pieces, and sometimes to the merit of them——now it will unite the first motive and the last.

My fall, for which you so kindly concern yourself, was not worth mentioning; for as I only bruised the muscles of my side, instead of breaking a rib, camphire infused in arquebusade took off the pain and all consequences in five or six days: and one has no right to draw on the compassion of others for what one *has* suffered and is past. Some love to be pitied on that score, but forget that they only excite, in the best-natured, joy on their deliverance. You commend me too for not complaining of my chronical evil—but, my dear madam, I should be blameable for the reverse. If

I would live to seventy-two, ought I not to compound for the encumbrances of old age? And who has fewer? And who has more cause to be thankful to Providence for his lot? The gout, it is true, comes frequently, but the fits are short, and very tolerable; the intervals are full health. My eyes are perfect, my hearing but little impaired, chiefly to whispers, for which I certainly have little occasion: my spirits never fail; and though my hands and feet are crippled, I can use both, and do not wish to box, wrestle, or dance a hornpipe. In short, I am just infirm enough to enjoy all the prerogatives of old age, and to plead them against any thing that I have not a mind to do. Young men must conform to every folly in fashion, drink when they had rather be sober, fight a duel if somebody else is wrong-headed, marry to please their fathers, not themselves, and shiver in a white waistcoat, because ancient almanacs, copying the Arabian, placed the month of June after May; though, when the style was reformed, it ought to have been intercalated between December and January. —Indeed, I have been so childish as to cut my hay for the same reason, and am now weeping over it by the fireside.——But to come to business.

You must suffer me to print 200 copies; and if you approve it, I will send thirty to the bishop of London out of your quota—You may afterwards give him more, if you please.

I do not propose putting your name, unless you desire it, as I think it would swear with the air of ancientry you have adopted in the signature and notes. The authoress will be no secret — and as it will certainly get into magazines, why should not you deal privately before hand with some bookseller, and have a second edition ready to appear soon after mine is finished? The difficulty of getting my edition at first, from the paucity of the number and from being only given as presents, will make the second edition eagerly sought for; and I do not see why my anticipating the publication should deprive you of the profit. — Rather than do that, I would print a smaller number. — I wish to raise an additional appetite to that which every body has for your writings—I am sure I did not mean to injure you. Pray think of this; there is time enough: I cannot begin to print under a week: my press has lain fallow for some time, and my printer must prepare ink, balls, &c. and as I have but one man, he cannot be expeditious.

I seriously do advise you to have a second edition ready: why should covetous booksellers run away with *all* the advantages of your genius? They get enough by their ample share of the sale.

I will say no more, but to repeat my thanks for your consent, which truly obliges me; and I am happy to have been the instrument of preserving what your modesty would have sunk. My esteem

could not increase; but one likes to be connected by favours to those one highly values. I am, dear madam,

Your most sincere admirer,
and obedient humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, July 10, 1789.

Though I am touchy enough with those I love, I did not think you dilatory, nor expect that answers to letters should be as quick as repartees. I do pity you for the accident that made you think yourself remiss. I enjoy your patient's recovery; but almost smiled unawares at the idea of her being sopped, and coming out of the water brustling up her feathers and ermines, and assuming the dignity of a Jupiter Pluvius.

I beseech you not to fancy yourself vain on my being your printer: would Sappho be proud, though Aldus or Elzevir were her typographer? My press has no rank but from its narrowness, that is, from the paucity of its editions, and from being a volunteer.——But a truce to compliments, and to reciprocal humility. Pray tell me how I shall convey your parcel to you: the impression is begun. I shall not dare, *vû le sujet* to send a copy to Mrs. * * * *; I do not know whether you will

venture. Mrs. Boscawen shall have one, but it shall be in your name: so authorise me to present it, that neither of us may tell the whitest of fibs. Shall I deliver any others for you within my reach, to save you trouble?

I have no more corrections to make. I told you brutally at first of the only two faults I found, and you sacrificed them with the patience of a martyr; for I conclude that when a good poet knowingly sins against measure twice, he is persuaded that he makes amends by greater beauties: in such case docility deserves the palm-branch.

I do not applaud your declining a London edition — but you have been so tractable, that I will let you have your way in this, though you only make over profit to magazines. Being an honest printer myself, I have little charity for those banditti of my profession who pilfer from every body they find on the road. Adieu, my dear madam!

Yours most cordially and sincerely.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night.

I WRITE a few lines only to confirm the truth of much of what you will read in the papers from Paris. Worse may already be come, or is expected every hour.

Mr. * * * and lady * * * called on me before dinner, after the post was gone out; and he showed me a letter from D * * *, who said two couriers arrived yesterday from the duke of Dorset and the duchess of Devonshire, the latter of whom was leaving Paris directly. Necker had been dismissed, and was thought to be set out for Geneva. Breteuil, who was at his country-house, had been sent for to succeed him. Paris was in an uproar; and, after the couriers had left it, firing of cannon was heard for four hours together. That must have been from the Bastille, as probably the *tiers état* were not so provided. It is shocking to imagine what may have happened in such a thronged city!

One of the couriers was stopped twice or thrice, as supposed to pass from the king; but redeemed himself by pretending to be dispatched by the *tiers état*. Madame de Calonne told D * * * that the newly encamped troops desert by hundreds.

Here seems the egg to be hatched, and imagination runs away with the idea. I may fancy I shall hear of the king and queen leaving Versailles, like Charles I.—and then skips imagination six-and-forty years lower, and figures their fugitive majesties taking refuge in this country.

I have besides another idea. If the Bastille conquers, still is it impossible, considering the general spirit in the country, and the numerous fortified places in France, but some may be seized by the

dissidents, and whole provinces be torn from the crown?—On the other hand, if the king prevails, what heavy despotism will the *états*, by their want of temper and moderation, have drawn on their country! They might have obtained many capital points, and removed great oppression—No French monarch will ever summon *états* again, if this moment has been thrown away.

Though I have stocked myself with such a set of visions for the event either way, I do not pretend to foresee what will happen. Penetration argues from reasonable probabilities; but chance and folly are apt to contradict calculation, and hitherto they seem to have full scope for action. One hears of no genius on either side, nor do symptoms of any appear. There will perhaps: such times and tempests bring forth, at least bring out, great men. I do not take the duke of Orleans or Mirabeau to be built *du bois dont on les fait*—no; nor monsieur Necker. He may be a great traitor, if he made the confusion designedly:—but it is a woful evasion, if the promised financier slips into a black politician. I adore liberty, but I would bestow it as honestly as I could; and a civil war, besides being a game of chance, is paying a very dear price for it.

For us, we are in most danger of a deluge; though I wonder we so frequently complain of long rains. The saying about St. Swithin is a proof of how often they recur; for proverbial sentences

are the children of experience, not of prophecy. Good-night!—In a few days I shall send you a beautiful little poem[1] from the Strawberry press.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Monday night, July 20, 1789.

My excellent Friend,

I never shall be angry with your conscientiousness, though I will not promise never to scold it, as you know I think you sometimes carry it too far—and how pleasant to have a friend to scold on such grounds! I see all your delicacy in what you call your *double treachery*, and your kind desire of connecting two of your friends. The seeds are sprung up already; and the bishop[2] has already condescended to make me the first, and indeed so unexpected a visit, that, had I in the least surmised it, I should certainly, as became me, have prevented him.

One effect, however, I can tell you your pimping between us will have:—his lordship has, to please your partiality, flattered me so agreeably in the letter you *betrayed*, that I shall never write to

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1 This was Bonner's Ghost.

2 The bishop of London.

you again without the dread of attempting the wit he is so liberal as to bestow on me; and then either way I must be dull or affected—though I hope to have the grace to prefer the former—and then you only will be the sufferer, as we both should by the latter.——But I will come to facts: they are plain bodies, can have nothing to do with wit, and yet are not dull to those who have any thing to do with them.

According to your order, I have delivered *Ghosts* to Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, lady Juliana Penn, Mrs. Walsingham, and Mr. Pepys. Mr. Batt, I am told, leaves London to-day, so I shall reserve his to his return. This morning I carried his thirty to the bishop of London, who said modestly, he should not have expected above ten. I was delighted with the palace, with the venerable chapel, and its painted episcopalities in glass, and the brave hall, &c. &c. Though it rained, I would crawl to Bonner's chair.—In short, my satisfaction would have been complete, but for wanting the presence of that jesuitess, *the good old papist.*[3]

To-morrow departs for London, to be delivered to the Bristol coach at the White-horse-cellar in Piccadilly, a parcel containing sixty-four Ghosts —one of which is printed on brown for your own

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3 The signature to Bonner's Ghost.

eating. There is but one more such, so you may preserve it like a relick. I know these two are not so good as the white: but as rarities, a collector would give ten times more for them; and *uniquity* will make them valued more than the charming poetry.—I believe, if there was but one ugly woman in the world, she would occasion a longer war than Helen did.

You will find the bishop's letter in the parcel.—I did not breathe a hint of my having seen it, as I could not conjure up into my pale cheeks the blush I ought to exhibit on such flattery.

I pity you most sincerely for your almost drowned guest. Fortune seems to delight in throwing poor *Louisas* in your way, that you may exercise your unbounded charity and benevolence. Adieu! pray write—I need not *write* to you to *pray*—but I wish, when your knees have what the common people call a worky day, you would employ your hands the whole time.

Yours most cordially.

P. S. I believe I have blundered, and that your knees would call a week-day a holiday.

To Mr. GOUGH.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 24, 1789.

I SHALL heartily lament with you, sir, the demolition of those beautiful chapels at Salisbury. I was scandalized long ago at the ruinous state in which they were indecently suffered to remain. It appears as strange, that, when a spirit of restoration and decoration has taken place, it should be mixed with barbarous innovation. As much as taste has improved, I do not believe that modern execution will equal our models. I am sorry that I can only regret, not prevent. I do not know the bishop of Salisbury even by sight, and certainly have no credit to obstruct any of his plans. Should I get sight of Mr. Wyatt, which it is not easy to do, I will remonstrate against the intended alteration; but probably without success, as I do not suppose he has authority enough to interpose effectually — still I will try. It is an old complaint with me, sir, that when families are extinct, chapters take the freedom of removing ancient monuments, and even of selling over again the site of such tombs. A scandalous, nay, dishonest abuse, and very unbecoming clergymen! Is it creditable for divines to traffic for consecrated ground, and which the church had already sold? I do not wonder that magnificent monuments are out of fashion, when

they are treated so disrespectfully. You, sir, alone have placed several out of the reach of such a kind of simoniacal abuse; for to buy into the church, or to sell the church's land twice over, breathes a similar kind of spirit.—Perhaps, as the subscription indicates taste, if some of the subscribers could be persuaded to object to the removal of the two beautiful chapels, as contrary to their view of beautifying, it might have good effect; or, if some letter were published in the papers against the destruction, as barbarous, and the result of bad taste, it might divert the design. I zealously wish it were stopped—but I know none of the chapter or subscribers. I have the honour to be, with great regard, sir,

Your much obliged
and most obedient humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. * *, 1789.

I know whence you wrote last, but not where you are now; you gave me no hint. I believe you fly lest I should pursue, and as if you were angry that I have forced you to sprout into laurels. Yet you say you are vain of it, and that you are no philosopher.—Now, if you are vain, I am sure you *are* a philosopher; for it is a maxim of mine, and one

of my own making, that there never was a philosopher that did not love *sweetmeats*.

You tell me too, that you like I should scold you—but since you have appeared as Bonner's ghost, I think I shall feel too much awe; for though (which I never expected would be in my power) I have made you stand *in a white sheet*, I doubt my respect is increased. I never did rate you for being too bad, but too good: and if, when you make up your week's account, you find but a fraction of vanity in the sum total, you will fall to repenting, and come forth on Monday as humble as * * *. Then, if I huff my heart out, you will only simper, and still wrap yourself up in your obstinate goodness.—Well! take your own way; I give you up to all your abominable virtues, and will go answer the rest of your letter.

I congratulate you on the demolition of the Bastille—I mean as you do, of its functions. For the poor soul itself, I had no ill will to it: on the contrary, it was a curious sample of ancient castellar dungeons, which the good folks the founders took for palaces:—yet I always hated to drive by it, knowing the miseries it contained. Of itself it did not gobble up prisoners to glut its maw, but received them by command. The destruction of it was silly, and agreeable to the ideas of a mob, who do not know stones and bars and bolts from a *lettre de cachet*. If the country remains free, the Bastille would be as tame as a ducking-stool, now

that there is no such thing as a scold. If despotism recovers, the Bastille will rise from its ashes! —recover, I fear, it will. The *états* cannot remain a mob of kings, and will prefer a single one to a larger mob of kings and greater tyrants. The nobility, the clergy, and people of property will wait, till by address and money they can divide the people—or, whoever gets the larger or more victorious army into his hands, will be a Cromwell or a Monk. In short, a revolution procured by a national vertigo does not promise a crop of legislators. It is time that composes a good constitution: it formed ours. We were near losing it by the lax and unconditional restoration of Charles II. The revolution was temperate, and has lasted—and though it might have been improved, we know that with all its moderation it disgusted half the nation, who would have brought back the old sores.

I abominate the Inquisition as much as you do:—yet if the king of Spain receives no check like his cousin Louis, I fear he will not be disposed to relax any terrors. Every crowned head in Europe must ache at present; and the frantic and barbarous proceedings in France will not meliorate the stock of liberty, though for some time their majesties will be mighty tender of the rights of their subjects.

According to this hypothesis, I can administer some comfort to you about your poor negroes. I

do not imagine that they will be emancipated at once—but their fate will be much alleviated, as the attempt will have alarmed their butchers enough to make them gentler, like the European monarchs, for fear of provoking the disinterested, who have no sugar plantations, to abolish the horrid traffic.

I do not understand the manœuvre of sugar, and, perhaps, am going to talk nonsense, as my idea may be impracticable—but I wish human wit, which is really very considerable in mechanics and merchantry, could devise some method of cultivating canes and making sugar without the manual labour of the human species. How many mills and inventions have there not been discovered to supply succedaneums to the work of the hands, and which before the discoveries would have been treated as visions! It is true, manual labour has sometimes taken it very ill to be excused, and has destroyed such mills—but the poor negroes would not rise and insist upon being worked to death. Pray talk to some ardent genius, but do not name me—not merely because I may have talked like an idiot, but because my ignorance might, *ipso facto*, stamp the idea with ridicule. People, I know, do not love to be put out of their old ways: no farmer listens at first to new inventions in agriculture; and I don't doubt but bread was originally deemed a new-fangled vagary by those who had seen their fathers live very comfortably upon

acorns. Nor is there any harm in starting new game to invention: many excellent discoveries have been made by men who were *à la chasse* of something very different. I am not quite sure that the arts of making gold and of living for ever have been yet found out:—yet to how many noble discoveries has the pursuit of those nostrums given birth! Poor chymistry, had she not had such glorious objects in view!

If you are sitting under a cowslip at your cottage, these reveries may amuse you for half an hour, at least make you smile; and for the ease of your conscience, which is always in a panic, they require no answer.

I will not ask you about the new History of Bristol, because you are too good a citizen to say a word against your native place—but do pray cast your eye on the prints of the cathedral and castle, the *chef-d'œuvres* of Chatterton's ignorance, and of Mr. Barrett's too—and, on two letters pretended to have been sent to me, and which never were sent. If my incredulity had wavered, they would have fixed it. I wish the milk-woman would assert, that Boadicea's dairy-maid had invented Dutch tiles; it would be like Chatterton's origin of heraldry and painted glass, in those two letters.

I must, however, mention one word about myself. In the new fourth volume of the Biographia Britannica I am more candidly treated about that poor lad than usual: yet the writer still affirms

that, according to my own account, my reply was too much in the common-place style of court-replies. Now my own words, and the truth, as they stand in print in the very letter of mine which this author quotes, were, "*I wrote him a letter with as much kindness and tenderness as if I had been his guardian.*" Is this by my own account a court-reply? — Nor did I conceive, for I never was a courtier, that courtiers are wont to make *tender* replies to the poor — I am glad to hear they do.

I have kept this letter some days in my writing-box, till I could meet with a stray member of parliament — for it is not worth making you pay for: but when you talk to me I cannot help answering incontinently: — besides, can one take up a letter at a long distance, and heat one's reply over again with the same interest that it occasioned at first? Adieu! I wish you may come to Hampton before I leave these purlieus!

Yours *More* and *More*.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 5, 1789.

You speak so unperemptorily of your motions, that I must direct to you at random: the most probable place where to hit you, I think, will be

Goodwood; and I do address this thither, because I am impatient to thank you for your tale, which is very pretty and easy and genteel. It has made me make a reflection, and that reflection made six lines; which I send you, not as good, but as expressing my thoughts on your writing so well in various ways which you never practised when you was much younger.—Here they are:

> The muse most wont to fire a youthful heart,
> To gild *your* setting sun reserved her art;
> To crown a life in virtuous labours pass'd,
> Bestow'd her numbers, and her wit at last;
> And when your strength and eloquence retire,
> Your voice in notes harmonious shall expire.

The *swan* was too common a thought to be directly specified—and, perhaps, even to be alluded to——no matter—such a trifle is below criticism.

I am still here, in no uncertainty, God knows, about poor lady Dysart, of whom there are not the smallest hopes. She grows weaker every day, and does actually still go out for the air, and may languish many days, though most probably will go off in a moment, as the water rises. She retains her senses perfectly, and as perfectly her unalterable calmness and patience, though fully sensible of her situation. At your return from Goodwood, I shall like to come to you, if you are unengaged, and ready to receive me. For the beauties of Park-place, I am too well acquainted

with them, not, like all old persons about their contemporaries, to think it preserves them long after they are faded; and I am so *unwalking*, that prospects are more agreeable to me when framed and glazed, and I look at them through a window. It is yourselves I want to visit, not your verdure. Indeed, except a parenthesis of scarce all August, there has been no temptation to walk abroad; and the tempter himself would not have persuaded me, if I could, to have climbed that long-lost mountain whence he could show one even the antipodes. It rained incessantly all June and all July; and now again we have torrents every day.

Jerningham's brother, the chevalier, is arrived from Paris, and does not diminish the horrors one hears every day. They are now in the capital dreading the sixteen thousand deserters who hover about them. I conclude, that when in the character of banditti the whole disbanded army have plundered and destroyed what they can, they will congregate into separate armies under different leaders, who will hang out different principles, and the kingdom will be a theatre of civil wars; and, instead of liberty, the nation will get petty tyrants — perhaps petty kingdoms: — and when millions have suffered, or been sacrificed, the government will be no better than it was — all owing to the intemperance of the *états*, who might have obtained a good constitution, or at least one much

meliorated, if they had set out with discretion and moderation. They have left too a sad lesson to despotic princes, who will quote this precedent of frantic *états* against assembling any more, and against all the examples of senates and parliaments that have preserved rational freedom.

Let me know when it will be convenient to you to receive me. Adieu!

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 4, 1789.

I am not surprised, my dear madam, that the notice of my illness should have stimulated your predominant quality, your sensibility. I cannot do less in return than relieve it immediately, by assuring you that I am in a manner recovered; and should have gone out before this time, if my mind were as much at ease as my poor limbs. I have passed five months most uncomfortably; the two last most unhappily. In June and September I had two bad falls by my own lameness and weakness, and was much bruised, while I was witness to the danger, and then to the death, of my invaluable niece, lady Dysart. She was angelic, and has left no children. The unexpected death of lord Waldegrave, one of the most amiable of men, has not only deprived me of him, but has

opened a dreadful scene of calamities! He and my niece were the happiest and most domestic of couples.

Your kind inquiries after me have drawn these details from me, for which I make no excuse: good-nature never grudges its pity. I, who love to force your gravity to smile, am seriously better pleased to indulge your benevolence with a subject of esteem, which, though moving your compassion, will be accompanied by no compunction. I will now answer your letter.

Your plea, that not composition, but business, has occasioned your silence, is no satisfaction to *me*. In my present anxious solitude I have again read Bonner and Florio, and the Bas-bleu; and do you think I am pleased to learn that you have not been writing? Who is it says something like this line?—

Hannah will *not* write, and Lactilla *will*.

They who think her earl Goodwin will outgo Shakspeare, might be in the right if they specified in what way. I believe she may write worse than he sometimes did, though that is not easy; but to excel him—oh! I have not words adequate to my contempt for those who can suppose such a possibility!

I am sorry, very sorry for what you tell me of poor Barrett's fate. Though he did write worse than Shakspeare, it is great pity he was told so,

as it killed him; and I rejoice that I did not publish a word in contradiction of the letters which he said Chatterton sent to me, as I was advised to do. I might have laughed at the poor man's folly, and then I should have been miserable to have added a grain to the poor man's mortification.

You rejoice *me*, not my vanity, by telling me my idea of a mechanic succedaneum to the labour of negroes is not visionary, but thought practicable. Oh! how I wish I understood sugar and ploughs, and could marry them!—Alas! I understand nothing useful. My head is as un-mechanic as it is un-arithmetic, un-geometric, un-metaphysic, un-commercial:—but will not some one of those superior heads to whom you have talked on my indigested hint reduce it to practicability? How a feasible scheme would stun those who call humanity romantic, and show, from the books of the custom-house, that murder is a great improvement of the revenue! Even the present situation of France is favourable. Could not Mr. Wilberforce obtain to have the enfranchisement of the negroes started there? The Jews are claiming their natural rights there; and blacks are certainly not so great defaulters as the Hebrews; though they too have undergone ample persecutions. Methinks, as lord George Gordon is in correspondence with the *états*, he has been a little remiss

in not signing the petition of those of his new communion.

The *états* are detestable and despicable; and, in fact, guilty of the outrages of the Parisian and provincial mobs. The mob of 1200—not legislators, but dissolvers of all laws, unchained the mastiffs that had been tied up, and were sure to worry all who fell in their way. To annihilate all laws, however bad, and to have none ready to replace them, was proclaiming anarchy. What should one think of a mad doctor, who should let loose a lunatic, suffer him to burn Bedlam, chop off the heads of the keepers, and then consult with some students in physic on the gentlest mode of treating delirium? By a late vote I see that the 1200 praters are reduced to 500—*vive la reine Billingsgate!* the Thalestris who has succeeded Louis quatorze. A committee of those Amazons stopped the duke of Orleans, who, to use their style, I believe is not *a barrel better herring*.

Your reflections on Vertot's passion for revolutions are admirable, and yet it is natural for an historian to like to describe times of action. Halcyon days do not furnish matter for talents; they are like the virtuous couple in a comedy, a little insipid. Mr. Manly and lady Grace, Mellefont and Cynthia, do not interest one much. Indeed, in a tragedy where they are unhappy, they give the audience full satisfaction—and no envy.

The newspapers, no doubt, thought doctor * * * could not do better than to espouse you. He certainly would be very judicious, could he obtain your consent — but, alas! you would soon squabble about Socinianism, or some of those *isms*. To tell you the truth, I hate all those Constantinopolitan jargons, that set people together by the ears about pedantic terms. When you apply scholastic phrases as happily and genteelly as you do in your Bas-bleu, they are delightful; but don't muddify your charming simplicity with controversial distinctions, that will sour your sweet piety. Sects are the bane of charity, and have deluged the world with blood.

I do not mean, by what I am going to say, to extort another letter from you before I have the pleasure of seeing you at Hampton; but I really shall be much obliged to you for a single line soon, only to tell me if miss Williams is at Stoke with the duchess of Beaufort.

To a short note, cannot you add a short P. S. on the fate of earl Goodwin?

Lac mihi — novum non frigore desit.

Adieu, my amiable friend!

Yours most sincerely.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 20, 1790.

It is very provoking that people must always be hanging or drowning themselves, or going mad, that you forsooth, mistress, may have the diversion of exercising your pity, and good nature, and charity, and intercession, and all that beadroll of virtues that make you so troublesome and amiable, when you might be ten times more agreeable by writing things that would not cost one above half-a-crown at a time. You are an absolutely walking hospital, and travel about into lone and bye places with your doors open to house stray casualties! I wish at least that you would have some children yourself, that you might not be plaguing one for all the pretty brats that are starving and friendless. I suppose it was some such Goody two or three thousand years ago that suggested the idea of an alma-mater, suckling the three hundred and sixty-five bantlings of the countess of Hainault.—Well, as your newly-adopted pensioners have *two* babes, I insist on your accepting *two* guineas for them instead of one at present (that is, when you shall be present).—If you cannot circumscribe your own charities, you shall not stint mine, madam, who can afford it much better, and who must be dunned for alms, and do not scramble over hedges and ditches in searching for

opportunities, of flinging away my money on good works. I employ mine better at *auctions, and in buying pictures and baubles, and hoarding curiosities,* that in truth I cannot keep long, but that will last *for ever* in my catalogue, and make me immortal! —Alas! will they cover a multitude of sins?— Adieu! I cannot jest after *that* sentence.

Yours most sincerely.

To Mr. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, May 17, 1790.

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure of telling you that lord Monson has acquainted me with his having brought his old portraits to town, and that you may see them at his house in Albemarle-street; but they are so much decayed, that he does not propose to having them repaired. — If you should be coming to town, I will beg you to give me previous notice, and I will be ready to attend you to his lordship's house; but I must know it over-night, that I may apprise lord Monson; and I should wish to hear from you in time, that I may not be at Strawberry-hill, whither I go frequently now the season is so fine. I am, with great regard,

Your much obliged humble servant.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 26, 1790.

I do not forget your lordship's commands, though I do recollect my own inability to divert you. Every year at my advanced time of life would make more reasonable my plea of knowing nothing worth repeating, especially at this season. The general topic of elections is the last subject to which I could listen: there is not one about which I care a straw: and I believe your lordship quite as indifferent. I am not much more *au fait* of war or peace; I hope for the latter, nay and expect it, because it is not yet war. Pride and anger do not deliberate to the middle of the campaign; and I believe even the great incendiaries are more intent on making a good bargain than on saving their honour. If they save lives, I care not who is the better politician: and as I am not to be their judge, I do not inquire what false weights they fling into the scales. Two-thirds of France, who are not so humble as I, seem to think they can entirely new-model the world with metaphysical compasses, and hold that no injustice, no barbarity need to be counted in making the experiment. Such legislators are sublime empirics, and in their universal benevolence have very little individual sensibility.—In short, the result of my reflections on what has passed in Europe for these latter cen-

turies is, that tyrants have no consciences, and reformers no feeling—and the world suffers both by the plague and by the cure.—What oceans of blood were Luther and Calvin the authors of being spilt! The late French government was detestable—yet I still doubt whether a civil war will not be the consequence of the revolution—and then what may be the upshot? Brabant was grievously provoked—is it sure that it will be emancipated? For how short a time do people who set out on the most just principles, advert to their first springs of motion, and retain consistency? Nay, how long can promoters of revolutions be sure of maintaining their own ascendant? They are like projectors, who are commonly ruined, while others make fortunes on the foundation laid by the inventors.

I am always your lordship's
very devoted humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night, July, 1790.

IT is certainly not from having any thing to tell you, that I reply so soon, but as the most agreeable thing I can do in my confinement. The gout came into my heel the night before last, perhaps from the deluge and damp. I increased it yesterday by limping about the house with a party I had

to breakfast. To-day I am lying on the *settee*, unable to walk alone, or even to put on a slipper. However, as I am much easier this evening, I trust it will go off.

I do not love disputes, and shall not argue with you about Bruce; but if you like him, you shall not choose an author for me. It is the most absurd, obscure, and tiresome book I know. I shall admire if you have a clear conception about most of the persons and matters in his work—but, in fact, I do not believe you have. Pray, can you distinguish between his *cock* and *hen* Heghes, and between all Yasouses and Ozoros?—and do you firmly believe that an old man and his son were sent for and put to death, because the king had run into a thorn-bush, and was forced to leave his clothes behind him? Is it your faith, that one of their Abyssinian majesties pleaded not being able to contribute towards sending for a new Abuna, because he had spent all his money at Venice in looking-glasses? And do you really think that Peter Paez was a Jack-of-all-trades, and built palaces and convents without assistance, and furnished them with his own hands? You, who are a little apt to contest most assertions, must have strangely let out your credulity! I could put forty questions to you as wonderful, and, for my part, could as soon credit * * * *.

I am tired of railing at French barbarity and folly. They are more puerile now serious, than

when in the long paroxysm of gay levity. Legislators, a senate, to neglect laws, in order to annihilate coats of arms and liveries! to pull down a king, and set up an emperor! They are hastening to establish the tribunal of the prætorian guards; for the sovereignty, it seems, is not to be hereditary. One view of their fête of the 14th I suppose is to draw money to Paris — and the consequence will be, that the deputies will return to the provinces drunk with independence and self-importance, and will commit fifty times more excesses, massacres, and devastations, than last year. George Selwyn says, that *monsieur*, the king's brother, is the only man of rank from whom they cannot take a title.

How frantickly have the French acted, and how rationally the Americans! — But Franklin and Washington were great men. None have appeared yet in France; and Necker has only returned to make a wretched figure! He is become as insignificant as his king; his name is never mentioned, but now and then as disapproving something that is done. Why then does he stay? Does he wait to strike some great stroke, when every thing is demolished? His glory, which consisted in being minister though a Protestant, is vanished by the destruction of popery; the honour of which, I suppose, he will scarce assume to himself.

I have vented my budget, and now good night! I feel almost as if I could walk up to bed.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 9, at night.

Mr. N * * * has offered to be postman to you; *whereof*, though I have nothing, or as little as nothing, to say, I thought *as how* it would look kinder to send nothing in writing than by word of mouth.

Nothing the first. So the peace is made, and the stocks drank its health in a bumper; but when they waked the next morning, they found they had reckoned without their host, and that their majesties the king of big Britain and the king of little Spain have agreed to make peace some time or other, if they can agree upon it; and so the stocks drew in their horns: but having great trust in some time or other, they only fell two pegs lower. I, who never believed there would be war, keep my prophetic stocks up to par, and my consol—ation still higher; for when Spanish pride truckles, and English pride has had the honour of bullying, I dare to say we shall be content with the ostensible triumph, as Spain will be with some secret article that will leave her much where she was before.—Vide Falkland's island.

Nothing the second. Miss * * * * 's match with lord * * * *. You asserted it so peremptorily, that, though I doubted it, I quoted you. Lo! it took its rise solely in poor old * * * * 's dotage,

that still harps on conjunctions copulative — but now disavows it, as they say, on a remonstrance from her daughter.

Nothing the third. Nothing will come of nothing, says king Lear, and

Your humble servant.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 12, 1790.

I must not pretend any longer, my dear lord, that this region is void of news and diversions. Oh! we can innovate as well as neighbouring nations. If an earl S * * *, though he cannot be a tribune, is ambitious of being a plebeian, he may without a law be as vulgar as heart can wish; and though we have not a national assembly to lay the axe to the root of nobility, the peerage have got a precedent for laying themselves in the kennel. Last night the earl of Barrymore was so humble as to perform a buffoon dance and act Scaramouch in a pantomime at Richmond for the benefit of Edwin, jun. the comedian: and I, like an old fool, but calling myself a philosopher that loves to study human nature in all its disguises, went to see the performance.

Mr. Gray thinks that some Milton or some Cromwell may be lost to the world under the

garb of a ploughman. Others may suppose that some excellent jack pudding may lie hidden under red velvet and ermine. I cannot say that by the experiment of last night the latter hypothesis has been demonstrated, any more than the inverse proposition in France, where, though there seem to be many as bloody-minded rascals as Cromwell, I can discover none of his abilities. They have settled nothing like a constitution; on the contrary, they seem to protract every thing but violence, as much as they can, in order to keep their louis a day, which is more than two-thirds of the assembly perhaps ever saw in a month — I do not love legislators that pay themselves so amply! They might have had as good a constitution as twenty-four millions of people could comport. As they have voted an army of an hundred and fifty thousand men, I know what their constitution will be, after passing through a civil war — in short, I detest them; they have done irreparable injury to liberty; for no monarch will ever summon *états* again; and all the real service that will result from their fury will be, that every king in Europe, for these twenty or perhaps thirty years to come, will be content with the prerogative he has, without venturing to augment it.

The empress of Russia has thrashed the king of Sweden; and the king of Sweden has thrashed the empress of Russia. I am more glad that both are beaten than that either is victorious; for I do

not, like our newspapers, and such admirers, fall in love with heroes and heroines who make war without a glimpse of provocation. I do like *our* making peace, whether we had provocation or not.

I am forced to deal in European news, my dear lord, for I have no homespun.

I don't think my whole inkhorn could invent another paragraph, and therefore I will take my leave with (your lordship knows) every kind wish for your health and happiness,

Your most devoted humble servant.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 27, 1791.

Your letter was most welcome, as yours always are, and I answer it immediately, though our post comes in so late that this will not go away till to-morrow. — Nay, I write, though I shall see you on Sunday, and have not a tittle to tell you. I lead so insipid a life, that, though I am content with it, it can furnish me with nothing but repetitions. I scarce ever stir from home in a morning, and most evenings go and play at loto with the French at Richmond, where I am heartily tired of hearing of nothing but their absurd countrymen, absurd both democrates and aristocrates. Calonne sends them gross lies, that raise their hopes to the skies:

and in two days they hear of nothing but new horrors and disappointments; and then, poor souls! they are in despair. I can say nothing to comfort them, but what I firmly believe, which is, that total anarchy must come on rapidly. — Nobody pays the taxes that are laid, and which, intended to produce eighty millions a month, do not bring in six. The new assembly will fall on the old, probably plunder the richest, and certainly disapprove of much they have done; for can eight hundred new ignorants approve of what has been done by twelve hundred almost as ignorant, and who were far from half agreeing? — And then their immortal constitution (which, besides, is to be mightily mended nine years hence) will die before it has cut any of its teeth but its grinders. The exiles are enraged at their poor king for saving his own life by a forced acceptance; and yet I know no obligation he has to his noblesse, who all ran away to save their own lives; not a gentleman, but the two poor gendarmes at Versailles, having lost their lives in his defence. I suppose La Fayette, Barnave, the Lameths, &c. will run away too, when the new tinkers and cobblers, of whom the present elect are and will be composed, proceed on the levelling system taught them by their predecessors, who, like other levellers, have taken good care of themselves. Good Dr. Priestley's friend, good monsieur Condorcet, has got a place in the treasury of 1,000*l.* a-year:

— *ex uno disce omnes!*—And thus a set of rascals, who might, with temper and discretion, have obtained a very wholesome constitution, witness Poland! have committed infinite mischief, infinite cruelty, infinite injustice, and left a shocking precedent against liberty, unless the Poles are as much admired and imitated as the French ought to be detested.

I do not believe the emperor will stir — yet. He, or his ministers, must see that it is the interest of Germany to let France destroy itself. His interference yet might unite and consolidate — at least check farther confusion: — and though I rather think that twenty thousand men might march from one end of France to the other, as, though the officers often rallied, French soldiers never were stout; yet having no officers, no discipline, no subordination, little resistance might be expected. Yet the enthusiasm that has been spread might turn into courage. Still it were better for Cæsar to wait. Quarrels amongst themselves will dissipate enthusiasm; and if they have no foreign enemy, they will soon have spirit enough to turn their swords against one another, and what enthusiasm remains will soon be converted into the inveteracy of faction. This is speculation, not prophecy: — I do not pretend to guess what will happen: — I do think I know what will not: I mean, the system of experiments that they call a constitution, cannot last. Mar-

vellous indeed would it be, if a set of military noble lads, pedantic academicians, curates of villages, and country advocates, could in two years, amidst the utmost confusion and altercation amongst themselves, dictated to or thwarted by obstinate clubs of various factions, have achieved what the wisdom of all ages and all nations has never been able to compose — a system of government that would set four-and-twenty millions of people free, and contain them within any bounds! This too without one great man amongst them. — If they had had, as Mirabeau seemed to promise to be — but as we know that he was too — a consummate villain, there would soon have been an end of their vision of liberty. And so there will be still, unless, after a civil war, they split into small kingdoms or commonwealths. — A little nation may be free; for it can be upon its guard. Millions cannot be so; because, the greater the number of men that are one people, the more vices, the more abuses there are, that will either require or furnish pretexts for restraints; and if vices are the mother of laws, the execution of laws is the father of power: — and of such parents one knows the progeny.

I did not think of writing such a rhapsody when I began — it shows how idle I am — I hope you will be so when you receive it. Adieu! I have tired my hand.

Yours ever.

P. S. The king of the French has written to the king of France and Great Britain, to notify his accession to the throne of Fontainebleau, where he is determined to reign as long as he is permitted, and obey all the laws that have been made to dethrone him.

N. B. The cardinal de Lomenie, whom they call the cardinal de *l'Ignominie* with much reason, is the only gentleman elected for the new chaos, and he has declined.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Sept. 29, 1791.

My Dear Madam,

I have been very sorry, but not at all angry, at not hearing from you so long. With all your friendly and benevolent heart, I know by experience how little you love writing to your friends—and I know why: you think you lose moments which you could employ in doing more substantial good; and that your letters only pamper our minds, but do not feed or clothe our bodies: if they did, you would coin as much paper as the French do in assignats. Do not imagine now that you have committed a wicked thing by writing to

me at last; comfort yourself, that your conscience, not temptation, forced you to write; and be assured I am as grateful as if you had written from choice, not from duty, your constant spiritual director.

I have been out of order the whole summer, but not very ill for above a fortnight. I caught a painful rheumatism by going into a very crowded church in a rainy day where all the windows were open, to hear our friend the bishop of London preach a charity sermon here at Twickenham. My gout would not resign to a new incumbent, but came too; and both together have so lamed my right arm, though I am now using it, that I cannot yet extend it entirely, nor lift it to the top of my head. However, I am free from pain; and as Providence, though it supplied us originally with so many bounties, took care we might shift with succedaneums on the loss of several of them, I am content with what remains of my stock; and since all my fingers are not useless, and that I have not six hairs left, I am not much grieved at not being able to comb my head. Nay, should not such a shadow as I have ever been, be thankful, that at the eve of seventy-five I am not yet passed away?

I am so little out of charity with the bishop for having been the innocent cause of the death of my shoulder, that I am heartily concerned for him

and her on Mrs. Porteus's accident.[1] It may have marbled her complexion, but I am persuaded has not altered her lively, amiable, good-humoured countenance. As I know not where to direct to them, and as you cannot suppose it a sin for a sheep to write to its pastor on a week-day, I wish you would mark the interest I take in their accident and escape from worse mischief.

I thank you most cordially for your inquiry after *my* wives.[2] I am in the utmost perplexity of mind about them; torn between hopes and fears. I believe them set out from Florence on their return since yesterday se'nnight, and consequently feel all the joy and impatience of expecting them in five or six weeks:—but then, besides fears of roads, bad inns, accidents, heats and colds, and the sea to cross in November at last; all my satisfaction is dashed by the uncertainty whether they come through Germany or France. I have advised, begged, implored, that it may not be through those Iroquois, Lestryons, Anthropophagi, the Franks; and then, hearing passports were abolished, and the roads more secure, I half consented, as they wished it, and the road is much shorter; and then I repented, and have contradicted myself again—And now I know not which

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[1] An overturn in a carriage.

[2] The two miss Berrys, whom he thus called.

route they will take! nor shall enjoy any comfort from the thoughts of their return, till they are returned safe.

'Tis well I am doubly guaranteed, or who knows, as I am as old almost as both her husbands together, but Mrs. B * * * * might have cast a longing eye towards me? How I laughed at hearing of her throwing a second muckender to a Methusalem! a fat red-faced veteran, with a portly hillock of flesh. I conclude all her grandfathers are dead; or, as there is no prohibition in the table of consanguinity against male ancestors, she would certainly have stepped back towards the deluge, and ransacked her pedigrees on both sides for some kinsman of the patriarchs. I could titter *à plusieurs reprises;* but I am too old to be improper, and you are too modest to be *impropered* to, and so I will drop the subject at the herald's office.

I am happy at and honour Miss B * * * 's resolution in casting away golden, or rather gilt chains: others out of vanity would have worn them till they had eaten into the bone. On that charming young woman's chapter I agree with you perfectly — not a jot on *Deborah* * * * * *, whom you admire: I have neither read her verses nor will. As I have not your aspen conscience, I cannot forgive the heart of a woman that is party per pale blood and tenderness, that curses our clergy and feels for negroes. Can I

forget the 14th of July, when they all contributed their faggot to the fires that her presbytyrants (as lord Melcombe called them) tried to light in every Smithfield in the island, and which, as Price and Priestley applauded in France, it would be folly to suppose they did not only wish but meant to kindle here? Were they ignorant of the atrocious barbarities, injustice, and violation of oaths committed in France? Did Priestley not know that the clergy there had no option left but between starving and perjury? And what does he think of the poor man executed at Birmingham, who declared at his death he had been provoked by the infamous hand-bill? — I know not who wrote it. — No, my good friend: *Deborah* may cant rhymes of compassion, but she is a hypocrite; and you shall not make me read her, nor with all your sympathy and candour can you esteem her. *Your* compassion for the poor blacks is genuine, sincere from your soul, most amiable; hers, a measure of faction: her party supported the abolition, and regretted the disappointment as a blow to the good cause. I know this. — Do not let your piety lead you into the weakness of respecting the bad, only because they hoist the flag of religion, while they carry a stilletto in the flag-staff. Did not they, previous to the 14th of July, endeavour to corrupt the guards? What would have ensued, had they succeeded, you must tremble to think!

You tell me nothing of your own health — may I flatter myself it is good? I wish I knew so authentically! and I wish I could guess when I should see you, without your being staked to the fogs of the Thames at Christmas — I cannot desire that. Adieu, my very valuable friend! I am, though unworthy,

Yours most cordially.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 1, 1792.

My much-esteemed Friend,

I have not so long delayed answering your letter from the pitiful revenge of recollecting how long your pen is fetching breath before it replies to mine — Oh! no — You know I love to *heap coals of kindness* on your head, and to draw you into little sins, that you may forgive yourself, by knowing your time was employed on big virtues. On the contrary, you would be revenged; for here have you, according to *your* notions, inveigled me into the fracture of a commandment; for I am writing to you on a *Sunday*, being the first moment of leisure that I have had since I received your letter. It does not indeed clash with my religious ideas, as I hold paying one's debts as good a deed, as praying and reading sermons for a whole

day in every week, when it is impossible to fix the attention to one course of thinking for so many hours for fifty-two days in every year.—Thus you see I can preach too—But seriously—and indeed I am little disposed to cheerfulness now—I am overwhelmed with troubles, and with business—and business that I do not understand—Law, and the management of a ruined estate, are subjects ill-suited to a head that never studied any thing that in worldly language is called useful. The tranquillity of my remnant of life will be lost, or so perpetually interrupted, that I expect little comfort—not that I am already intending to grow rich, but the moment one is supposed so, there are so many alert to turn one to their own account, that I have more letters to write to satisfy—or rather to dissatisfy them, than about my own affairs, though the latter are all confusion. I have such missives, on agriculture, pretensions to livings, offers of taking care of my game as I am incapable of it, self-recommendations of making my robes, and round hints of taking out my writ, that at least I may name a proxy, and give my dormant conscience to somebody or other! I trust you think better of my heart and understanding than to suppose that I have listened to any one of these new *friends*. Yet though I have negatived all, I have been forced to answer some of them before you; and that will convince you how cruelly ill I have passed my time lately,

besides having been made ill with vexation and fatigue — But I am tolerably well again.

For the other empty metamorphosis that has happened to the outward man,[1] you do me justice in concluding that it can do nothing but tease me — it is being called names in one's old age. I had rather be my lord mayor, for then I should keep the nickname but a year, and mine I may retain a little longer — not that at seventy-five I reckon on becoming my lord Methusalem.

Vainer however I believe I am already become; for I have wasted almost two pages about myself, and said not a tittle about your health, which I most cordially rejoice to hear you are recovering, and as fervently hope you will entirely recover. I have the highest opinion of the element of water as a constant beverage, having so deep a conviction of the goodness and wisdom of Providence, that I am persuaded that when it indulged us in such a luxurious variety of eatables, and gave us but one drinkable, it intended that our sole liquid should be both wholesome and corrective. — Your system I know is different — You hold that mutton and water were the only cock and hen that were designed for our nourishment — but I am apt to

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[1] His accession to his title. This is the last letter but one signed Horace Walpole; and that one follows it, being without date or other internal evidence of the time it was written.

doubt whether draughts of water for six weeks are capable of restoring health, though some are strongly impregnated with mineral and other particles — Yet you have staggered me: the Bath water, by your account, is like electricity compounded of contradictory qualities; the one attracts and repels; the other turns a shilling yellow, and whitens your jaundice. I shall hope to see you (when is that to be?) without alloy.

I must finish, wishing you three hundred and thirteen days of happiness for the new year that is arrived this morning: the fifty-two that you hold in commendam, I have no doubt will be rewarded as such good intentions deserve.

Adieu, my *too* good friend! My direction shall talk superciliously to the postman;[2] but do let me continue unchangeably

Your faithful and sincere, &c.

To LADY * * * *.

Your ladyship's illustrious exploits are the constant theme of my meditations. Your expeditions are so rapid, and to such distant regions, that I cannot help thinking you are possessed of the

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[2] He means franking his letter by his newly acquired title of earl of Orford.

giant's boots that stepped seven leagues at a stride, as we are assured by that accurate historian Mother Goose. You are, I know, madam, an excellent walker, yet methinks seven leagues at once are a prodigious straddle for a fair lady. But whatever is your manner of travelling, few heroines ancient or modern can be compared to you for length of journeys. Thalestris, queen of the Amazons, and M. M. or N. N. queen of Sheba, went each of them the Lord knows how far to meet Alexander the great and Solomon the wise; the one to beg the favour of having a daughter (I suppose) and heiress by him; and the other, says scandal, to grant a like favour to the Hebrew monarch. Your ladyship, who has more real Amazonian principles, never makes visits but to empresses, queens, and princesses; and your country is enriched with the maxims of wisdom and virtue which you collect in your travels. For such great ends did Herodotus, Pythagoras, and other sages, make voyages to Egypt, and every distant kingdom; and it is amazing how much their own countries were benefited by what those philosophers learned in their peregrinations. Were it not that your ladyship is actuated by such public spirit, I could put you in mind, madam, of an old story that might save you a great deal of fatigue and danger — and now I think of it, as I have nothing better to fill my letter with, I will relate it to you.

Pyrrhus, the martial and *magnanimous* king of Epirus (as my lord Lyttelton would call him), being, as I have heard or seen Goodman Plutarch say, intent on his preparations for invading Italy; Cineas, one of the grooms of his bed-chamber, took the liberty of asking his majesty what benefit he expected to reap if he should be successful in conquering the Romans? — Jesus! said the king peevishly; why, the question answers itself. When we have overcome the Romans, no province, no town, whether Greek or Barbarian, will be able to resist us: we shall at once be masters of all Italy. Cineas, after a short pause, replied, And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?—Do next? answered Pyrrhus; why, seize Sicily.—Very likely, quoth Cineas; but will that put an end to the war?—The gods forbid! cried his majesty: when Sicily is reduced, Libya and Carthage will be within our reach. And then, without giving Cineas time to put in a word, the heroic prince ran over Africa, Greece, Asia, Persia, and every other country he had ever heard of upon the face of God's earth; not one of which he intended should escape his victorious sword. At last, when he was at the end of his geography, and a little out of breath, Cineas watched his opportunity, and said quietly, Well, sire, and when we have conquered all the world, what are we to do then?—Why, then, said his majesty, extremely satisfied with his

own prowess, we will live at our ease; we will spend whole days in banqueting and carousing, and will think of nothing but our pleasures.

Now, madam, for the application. Had I had the honour a few years ago of being your confidential abigail, when you meditated a visit to princess Esterhazi, I would have ventured to ask your ladyship of what advantage her acquaintance would be to you? Probably you would have told me, that she would introduce you to several electresses and margravines, whose courts you would visit. That having conquered all their hearts, as I am persuaded you would, your next jaunt should be to Hesse; from whence it would be but a trip to Aix, where madame de Rochouart lives. Soaring from thence you would repair to the imperial court at Vienna, where resides the most august, most virtuous, and most plump of empresses and queens — no, I mistake — I should only have said, of empresses; for her majesty of Denmark, God bless her! is reported to be full as virtuous, and three stone heavier. Shall not you call at Copenhagen, madam? If you do, you are next door to the Czarina, who is the quintessence of friendship, as the princess Daskioff says, whom, next to the late Czar, her Muscovite majesty loves above all the world. Asia, I suppose, would not enter into your ladyship's system of conquest; for, though it contains a sight of queens and sultanas, the poor

ladies are locked up in abominable places, into which I am sure your ladyship's amity would never carry you—I think they call them seraglios. — Africa has nothing but empresses stark-naked; and of complexions directly the reverse of your alabaster. They do not reign in their own right; and what is worse, the emperors of those barbarous regions wear no more robes than the sovereigns of their hearts — And what are princes and princesses without velvet and ermine? As I am not a jot a better geographer than king Pyrrhus, I can at present recollect but one lady more who reigns alone, and that is her majesty of Otaheite, lately discovered by Mr. Bankes and Dr. Solander; and for whom your ladyship's compassionate breast must feel the tenderest emotions, she having been cruelly deprived of her faithful minister and lover Tobiu, since dead at Batavia.

Well, madam, after you should have given me the plan of your intended expeditions, and not left a queen regent on the face of the globe unvisited, I would ask what we were to do next? — Why then, dear Abigail, you would have said, we will retire to * * * *, we will plant shrubs all the morning, read Anderson's Royal Genealogies all the evening; and once or twice a week I will go to Gunnersbury and drink a bottle with princess Amelia. — Alas, dear lady! and cannot you do all that without skuttling from one end of the world to the other? — This was the upshot of all Cineas's

inquisitiveness: and this is the pith of this tedious letter from, madam,

Your ladyship's most faithful Aulic counsellor and humble admirer.

To Mr. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, March 15, 1792.

Lord Orford is confined by the gout in his arm; but has examined the MS. Catalogue, and cannot possibly satisfy Mr. Gough whether it is the original, or a copy, from which Vertue made his extracts. As well as lord Orford recollects, Vertue extracted his list from a MS. in the possession of Mr. Bryan Fairfax; but Vertue took out nothing but the pictures, and none of the plate, furniture, &c. And though lord Orford observes that some of the same pictures are mentioned as at different palaces, yet there seemed to be several more than are in the Catalogue of the Royal Collection published by Bathow. And this is all the information lord Orford can give Mr. Gough.

To THOMAS BARRETT, Esq.

Berkeley-square, May 14, 1792.

Dear Sir,

Though my poor fingers do not yet write easily, I cannot help inquiring if Mabeuse[1] is arrived safely at Lee, and fits his destined stall in the library.

My amendment is far slower, *comme de raison* than ever, and my weakness much greater. Another fit, I doubt, will confine me to my chair, if it does not do more — it is not worth haggling about that.

Dr. Darwin has appeared, superior in some respects to the former part. The Triumph of Flora, beginning at the 59th line, is most beautifully and enchantingly imagined; and the twelve verses that by miracle describe and comprehend the creation of the universe out of chaos, are in my opinion the most sublime passage in any author, or in any of the few languages with which I am acquainted. There are a thousand other verses most charming, or indeed all are so, crowded with most poetic imagery, gorgeous epithets and style — and yet these four cantos do not please me equally with the Loves of the Plants. This seems to me almost

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1 A capital picture by that master, then lately purchased by Mr. Barrett.

as much a rhapsody of unconnected parts; and is so deep, that I cannot read six lines together and know what they are about, till I have studied them in the long notes, and then perhaps do not comprehend them — But all this is my fault, not Dr. Darwin's — Is he to blame, that I am no natural philosopher, no chemist, no metaphysician?

One misfortune will attend this glorious work — it will be little read but by those who have no taste for poetry, and who will be weighing and criticising his positions, without feeling the imagination, harmony, and expression of the versification.

Is not it extraordinary, dear sir, that two of our very best poets, Garth and Darwin, should have been physicians? — I believe they have left all the lawyers wrangling at the turnpike of Parnassus. Adieu, dear sir!

Yours most cordially.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, August 31, 1792.

YOUR long letter and my short one crossed one another upon the road. I knew I was in your debt; but I had nothing to say but what you know better than I; for you read all the French papers, and I read none, as they have long put

me out of all patience: and besides, I hear so much of their horrific proceedings, that they quite disturb me, and have given me what I call *the French disease;* that is, a barbarity that I abhor, for I cannot help wishing destruction to thousands of human creatures whom I never saw.—But when men have worked themselves up into tigers and hyænas, and labour to communicate their appetite for blood, what signifies whether they walk on two legs or four, or whether they dwell in cities, or in forests and dens?—Nay, the latter are the more harmless wild beasts; for they only cranch a poor traveller now and then, and when they are famished with hunger:—the others, though they have dined, cut the throats of some hundreds of poor Swiss for an afternoon's luncheon. Oh! the execrable nation!

I cannot tell you any new particulars, for mesdames de Cambis and d'Hennin, my chief informers, are gone to Goodwood to the poor duchesse de Biron, of whose recovery I am impatient to hear—and so I am of the cause of her very precipitate flight and panic. She must, I think, have had strong motives; for two years ago I feared she was much too courageous, and displayed her intrepidity too publicly. If I did not always condemn the calling *bad* people *mad* people, I should say all Paris is gone distracted: they furnish provocation to every species of retaliation, by publishing rewards for assassination of

kings and generals, and cannot rest without incensing all Europe against them.

The duchess of York gave a great entertainment at Oatlands on her duke's birth-day, sent to his tradesmen in town to come to it, and allowed two guineas a-piece to each for their carriage — gave them a dance, and opened the ball herself with the prince of Wales. A company of strollers came to Weybridge to act in a barn: she was solicited to go to it, and did out of charity, and carried all her servants. Next day a methodist teacher came to preach a charity sermon in the same theatre, and she consented to hear it on the same motive — but her servants desired to be excused, on not understanding English.—"Oh!" said the duchess, "but you went to the comedy, which you understood less, and you shall go to the sermon;" to which she gave handsomely, and for them. I like this.

Tack this to my other fragment, and then, I trust, I shall not be a defaulter in correspondence. I own I am become an indolent poor creature:— but is that strange? With seventy-five years over my head, or on the point of being so; with a chalk-stone in every finger; with feet so limping, that I have been but twice this whole summer round my own small garden, and so much weaker than I was, can I be very comfortable, but when sitting quiet and doing nothing? All my strength consists in my sleep, which is as vigorous as at

twenty: — but with regard to letter-writing, I have so many to write on business which I do not understand, since the unfortunate death of my nephew, that, though I make them as brief as possible, half-a-dozen short ones tire me as much as a long one to an old friend; and as the busy ones must be executed, I trespass on the others, and remit them to another day. Norfolk has come very *mal-à-propos* into the end of my life, and certainly never entered into my views and plans; and I, who could never learn the multiplication table, was not intended to transact leases, direct repairs of farm houses, settle fines for church lands, negociate for lowering interest on mortgages, &c. In short, as I was told formerly, though I know several things, I never understood any thing useful. *A-propos*, the letter of which lady C * * * * told you is not at all worth your seeing. It was an angry one to a parson who oppresses my tenants, and will go to law with them about tythes. She came in as I was writing it; and as I took up the character of parson myself, and preached to him as pastor of a flock, which it did not become him to lead into the paths of law, instead of those of peace, I thought it would divert, and showed it to her.

Adieu! I have been writing to you till midnight, and my poor fingers ache.

Yours ever.

To Mr. GOUGH.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 14, 1792.

Sir,

I have a portrait of Law, and should not object to letting a copy of it be taken; but I doubt that could not be done, being in crayons, by Rosalba, under a glass; and any shaking being prejudicial to crayons, I fixed the picture in one of the niches of my gallery under a net work of carving, whence it cannot be removed without pulling the niche to pieces. The picture too being placed over the famous statue of the eagle, there is no getting near to it, and I certainly could not venture to let a ladder be set against the statue. Indeed, as there are extant at least three prints of Law, there does not seem to be another wanting. I am sorry, sir, I cannot give you a more satisfactory answer about lady Wallingford. I have met her at two or three places, but I did not visit her, nor have the least knowledge of her husband's family, nor to whom she left any thing she had; nor can. I direct you at all where to inquire. I did not even know that there is an earl of Banbury living.

Your account, sir, of the Cornwall monument is very curious. I never met with the painter's name, and thank you for it. I am, with great regard, sir,

Your obedient humble servant.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 9, 1793.

My holy Hannah,

With your innate and usual goodness and sense, you have done me justice by guessing exactly at the cause of my long silence. You have been apt to tell me that my letters diverted you — How then could I write, when it was impossible but to attrist you! when I could speak of nothing but unparalleled horrors! and but awaken your sensibility, if it slumbered for a moment! What mind could forget the 10th of August and the 2d of September — and that the black and bloody year 1792 has plunged its murderous dagger still deeper, and already made 1793 still more detestably memorable! though its victim has at last been rewarded for four years of torture by forcing from him every kind of proof of the most perfect character that ever sat on a throne. Were these, alas! themes for letters? Nay, am I not sure that *you* have been still more shocked by a crime that passes even the guilt of shedding the blood of poor Louis — to hear of atheism avowed, and the avowal tolerated by monsters calling themselves a National Assembly! — But I have no words that can reach the criminality of such *inferno-human* beings — but must compose a term that aims at conveying my idea of them — For the future it will

be sufficient to call them *the French* — I hope no other nation will ever deserve to be confounded with them!

Indeed, my dear friend, I have another reason for wishing to burn my pen entirely: all my ideas are confounded and overturned — I do not know whether all I ever learned in the seventy first years of my seventy-five was not wrong and false: common sense, reasoning, calculation, conjecture from analogy and from history of past events, all, all have been baffled; nor am I sure that what used to be thought the result of experience and wisdom, was not a mass of mistakes —— Have I not found, do I not find, that the invention of establishing metals as the *signs* of property was an useless discovery, or at least only useful till the art of making paper was found out? Nay, the latter is preferable to gold and silver. If the ores were adulterated and cried down, nobody would take them in exchange. Depreciate paper as much as you will, and it will still serve all the purposes of barter. Tradesmen still keep shops, stock them with goods, and deliver their commodities for those coined rags.—Poor Reason, where art thou?

To show you that memory and argument are of no value, at least with me, I thought a year or two that this paper-mint would soon blow up, because I remembered that when Mr. Charles Fox and one or two more youths of brilliant genius

first came to light, and into vast debts at play, they imparted to the world an important secret which they had discovered — It was, that nobody needed to want money, if they would pay enough for it. Accordingly, they borrowed of Jews at vast usury: but as they had made but an incomplete calculation, the interest so soon exceeded the principal, that the system did not maintain its ground for above two or three years. Faro has proved a more substantial speculation. — But I miscarried in applying my remembrance to the assignats, which still maintain their ground against that long-decried, but as long-adored corruptor of virtue, gold — Alack! I do not hear that virtue has flourished more for the destruction of its old enemy!

Shall I add another truth? I have been so disgusted and fatigued by hearing of nothing but French massacres, &c. and found it so impossible to shift conversation to any other topic, that before I had been a month in town, I wished miss G * * * * * would revive, that people might have at least one other subject to interest the ears and tongues of the public. — But no wonder universal attention is engrossed by the present portentous scene! It seems to draw to a question, whether Europe or France is to be depopulated; whether civilization can be recovered, or the republic of Chaos can be supported by assassination. We have heard of the golden, silver, and iron ages —

the brazen one existed, while the French were only predominantly insolent. — What the present age will be denominated, I cannot guess. Though the paper age would be characteristic, it is not emphatic enough, nor specifies the enormous sins of the fiends that are the agents. I think it may be styled the diabolic age — The duke of Orleans has dethroned Satan, who since his fall has never instigated such crimes as Orleans has perpetrated.

Let me soften my tone a little, and harmonise your poor mind by sweeter accents. In this deluge of triumphant enormities, what traits of the sublime and beautiful may be gleaned! Did you hear of madame Elizabeth, the king's sister? a saint like yourself. She doted on her brother, for she certainly knew his soul. In the tumult in July, hearing the populace and the poissardes had broken into the palace, she flew to the king, and by embracing him tried to shield his person. The populace took her for the queen, cried out, "*Voilà cette chienne, cette Autrichienne!*" and were proceeding to violence. Somebody, to save her, screamed, "*Ce n'est pas la reine, c'est* ——" The princess said, "*Ah! mon Dieu! ne les detrompez pas.*"—If that was not the most sublime instance of perfect innocence ready prepared for death, I know not where to find one.

Sublime indeed too was the sentence of good father Edgeworth, the king's confessor, who thinking his royal penitent a little dismayed just

before the fatal stroke, cried out "*Montez, digne fils de St. Louis! Le ciel vous est ouvert.*" — The holy martyr's countenance brightened up, and he submitted at once. Such victims, such confessors as those, and monsieur de Malesherbes, repair some of the breaches in human nature made by Orleans, Condorcet, Santerre, and a legion of evil spirits.

The tide of horrors has hurried me much too far, before I have not vented a note of my most sincere concern for your bad account of your health. I feel for it heartily, and wish your frame were as sound as your soul and understanding. What can I recommend? I am no physician but for my own flimsy texture, which by studying, and by contradicting all advice, I have drawn to this great age. Patience, temperance, nay, abstinence, are already yours — in short, you want to be corrected of nothing but too much piety, too much rigour towards yourself, and too much sensibility for others. Is not it possible to serve mankind, without feeling too great pity? — Perhaps I am a little too much hardened — I am grown too little alarmed for the health of my friends, from being become far more indifferent to life — I look to the nearness of my end, as a delivery from spectacles of woe. We have even amongst us monsters, more criminal, in speculation at least, than the French — They had cause to wish for correction of a bad government, though, till

taught to dislike it, three-fourths of the country, I maintain, adored theirs. We have the perfectest ever yet devised—but if to your numerous readings of little pamphlets you would add one more, called *Village-politics*, infinitely superior to any thing on the subject, clearer, better stated, and comprehending the whole mass of matter in the shortest compass, you will be more mistress of the subject than any man in England. I know who wrote it, but will not tell you, because you did not tell me.

Your most faithful humble servant
and friend.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, March 23, 1793.

I SHALL certainly not leave off taunting your virtues, my excellent friend, for I find it sometimes makes you correct them. I scolded you for your modesty in not acquainting me with your *Village-politics* even after they were published; and you have already conquered that unfriendly delicacy, and announced another piece of which you are in labour. Still I see there wanted your ghostly father, the bishop of London, to enjoin you to be *quite* shameless and avow your natural child. I do approve his doctrine: calling it by your own

name will make its fortune. If, like Rousseau, you had left your babe among the *enfans trouvés*, it might never be heard of more than his poor issue have been; for I can but observe that the French patriots, who have made such a fuss with his ashes, have not taken the smallest pains to attempt to discover his real progeny, which might not have been impossible by collating dates and circumstances.

I am proud of having imitated you at a great distance, and been persuaded, much against my will and practice, to let my name be put to the second subscription for the poor French clergy, as it was thought it might tend to animate that consumptive contribution.

I am impatient for your pamphlet, not only as being yours, but hoping it will invigorate horror against French atheism, which I am grieved to say did not by any means make due impression. I did very early apply to *your confessor*, to beg he would enjoin his clergy to denounce that shocking impiety—I could almost recommend to you to add a slight postscript on the massacre of that wretch *Manuel*. I do not love such insects, as we are, dispensing *judgments*—yet if the punishment of that just victim might startle such profane criminals, it might be charity to suggest the hint to them.

24th.

I was interrupted, and could not finish my letter in a breath, as I meant the moment I had received yours, from eagerness to thank you for the notice of your *publication*. I wish you had added the name of your man-midwife the printer; but I trust to seeing you stand in a black and white sheet, the newspaper. Mrs. Boscawen was so kind as to call on me the same day with the same information from your letter to her—but in hers were some words on the late bankruptcies, more than were in mine, that alarm us, and that, though not explicit, look as if you yourself have suffered by those failures. You have such a friendly and feeling heart, that it is impossible to discern whether any grief is not rather on account of others than on your own. Pray be confidential enough to tell me; for *I* have not such universal charity, as to lament the loss of others as I should yours.

I must modify the massacre of Manuel: he has been a good deal stabbed, but will, they say, recover. Perhaps it is better that some of those assassins should live to acknowledge, that "Do not to others what you would not have done to you" is not so silly a maxim, as most of the precepts of morality and justice have lately been deemed by *philosophers and legislators*—titles self-assumed by men, who have abolished all other titles; and who have disgraced and debased the former denomination, and under the latter have

enjoined triple perjuries, and at last cannot fix on any code which should exact more forswearing. I own I am pleased that that ruffian pedant Condorcet's new constitution was too clumsy and unwieldy to go down the throats of those who have swallowed every thing else. I did but just cast my eyes on the beginning and end, and was so lucky as to observe the hypocrite's contradiction: he sets out with declaration of equality, and winds up with security of property. That is, we will plunder every body, and then entail the spoils on ourselves and our (*wrong*) heirs.

Well! that bloody chaos seems recoiling on themselves! It looks as if civil war was bursting out in many provinces, and will precipitate approaching famine. — When, till *now*, could one make such a reflection without horror to one's self? —— But, alas! have not the French brought it to the question, whether Europe or France should be laid desolate? Religion, morality, justice, have been stabbed, torn up by the roots: every right has been trampled under foot. Marriage has been profaned and undermined by law; and no wonder, that, amidst such excesses, the poor arts have shared in the common ruin! —— And who have been the perpetrators of, or advocates for, such universal devastation? Philosophers, geometricians, astronomers —— a Condorcet, a Baillie, a bishop of Autun, and a doctor Priestley, and the last the worst. The French had seen grievances, cry-

ing grievances! yet not under the good late king. But what calamities or dangers threatened or had fallen on Priestley, but want of papal power, like his predecessor Calvin? If you say his house was burnt—but did he intend the fire should blaze on that side of the street? *Your* charity may believe him innocent — but your understanding does not. Well! I am glad to hear he is going to America; I hope he will not bring back scalping, even to that national assembly of which he was proud of being elected a member! I doubt if Cartouche would have thought it an honour.

It was stuck up in Lloyd's coffee-house lately, that the duke of Orleans was named *Chef de la republique.* I thought it should be *Chef de la Lie publique.*

For the best and most comfortable part of your letter I have not thanked you yet, my dear friend; I mean the prospect of seeing you next month, and thank the zodiac, next month is very near. I must now for my own sake, as well as yours, hope that your health will continue to improve, as it is the condition of the bond — A pleasant word, that *continue;* it implies you have been mending.

Your postscript said you had been telling me a lie—So have I; for, on reading your letter again, I find you had named your *accoucheur* Cadell. I do not wonder he has been slow. I was told lately, that he has said that the public is so totally engrossed by politics (and many pieces of that sort

I conclude come from his press), that the receipts of his shop, which used to be fifteen thousand a year, have this year decreased two-thirds.—So the French par bricole have destroyed *our* literature too.

Adieu! I long to see both you and your pamphlet, and am

Most cordially yours.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 13, 1793.

I THANK you much for all your information—some parts made me smile:—yet, if what you heard of * * * * proves true, I rather think it deplorable! How can love of money, or the still vainer of all vanities, ambition of wearing a high but most insignificant office, which even poor lord * * * * * * could execute, tempt a very old man, who loves his ease and his own way, to stoop to wait like a footman behind a chair, for hours, and in a court whence he had been cast ignominiously? I believe I have more pride than most men alive: I could be flattered by honours acquired by merit, or by some singular action of eclat—but for titles, ribands, offices of no business, which any body can fill, and must be given to many, I should just as soon be proud of being the top 'squire in a coun-

try village. It is only worse to have waded to distinction through dirt, like lord * * * *.

All this shifting of scenes may, as you say, be food to the *Fronde*——*Sed defendit numerus.* It is perfectly ridiculous to use any distinction of parties but the *ins* and the *outs.* Many years ago I thought that the wisest appellations, for contending factions ever assumed, were those in the Roman empire, who called themselves *the greens and the blues:* it was so easy, when they changed sides, to slide from one colour to the other — and then a blue might plead that he had never been *true blue,* but always a *greenish blue;* and *vice versâ.*

I allow that the steadiest party man may be staggered by novel and unforeseen circumstances. The outrageous proceedings of the French republicans have wounded the cause of liberty, and will, I fear, have shaken it for centuries; for Condorcet and such fiends are worse than the imperial and royal dividers of Poland. — But I do not see why detestation of anarchy and assassination must immediately make one fall in love with garters and seals.

I am sitting by the fire, as I have done ever since I came hither; and since I do not expect warm weather in June, I am wishing for rain, or I shall not have a mouthful of hay, nor a noseful of roses. —Indeed, as I have seen several fields of hay cut, I wonder it has not brought rain, as usual. My creed is, that rain is good for hay, as I conclude

every climate and its productions are suited to each other. Providence did not trouble itself about its being more expensive to us to make our hay over and over; it only took care it should not want water enough. Adieu!

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night, late, July 17, 1793.

I AM just come from dining with the bishop of London at Fulham, where I found lord and lady Frederick Campbell who told me of the alarm you had from hearing some screams that you thought lady A.'s, and the disorder brought upon you by flying to assist her. I do not at all wonder at your panic, and rejoice it was not founded, and that you recovered so soon. I am not going to preach against your acting so naturally:—but as you have some complaint on your breast, I must hope you will remember this accident, and be upon your guard against both sudden and rapid exertions, when you have not a tantamount call. I conclude the excessive heat we have had for twelve complete days contributed to overpower you.

It is much cooler to-day, yet still delicious; for be it known to you that I have enjoyed weather worthy of Africa, and yet without swallowing mouthfuls of musketos, nor expecting to hear

hyænas howl in the village, nor to find scorpions in my bed. Indeed, all the way I came home, I could but gaze at the felicity of my countrymen. The road was one string of stage-coaches loaded within and without with noisy jolly folks, and chaises and gigs that had been pleasuring in clouds of dust; every door and every window of every house was open, lights in every shop, every door with women sitting in the street, every inn crowded with jaded horses, and every ale-house full of drunken topers; for you know the English always announce their sense of heat or cold by drinking. ——Well! it was impossible not to enjoy such a scene of happiness and affluence in every village, and amongst the lowest of the people—and who are told by villainous scribblers that they are oppressed and miserable.—New streets, new towns are rising every day and every where; the earth is covered with gardens and crops of grain.

How bitter to turn from this Elysium to the Temple at Paris! The fiends there have now torn her son from the queen! Can one believe that they are human beings, who 'midst all their confusions sit coolly meditating new tortures, new anguish for that poor, helpless, miserable woman, after four years of unexampled sufferings? Oh! if such crimes are not made a dreadful lesson, this world might become a theatre of cannibals!

I hope the checks in Bretagne are legends coined by miscreants at Paris. What can one believe?

Well, I will go to bed, and try to dream of peace and plenty; and though my lawn is burnt, and my peas and beans, and roses and strawberries parched, I will bear it with patience till the harvest is got in. Saint Swithin can never hold his water for forty days, though he can do the contrary. Good-night!

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 10, 1794.

I CERTAINLY sympathize with you on the reversed and gloomy prospect of affairs, too extensive to detail in a letter; nor indeed do I know any thing more than I collect from newspapers and public reports; and those are so overcharged with falsehoods on all sides, that, if one waits for truth to emerge, one finds new subjects to draw one's attention before firm belief can settle its trust on any. That the mass and result are bad, is certain; and though I have great alacrity in searching for comforts and grounds of new hopes, I am puzzled as much in seeking resources, as in giving present credit. Reasoning is out of the question: all calculation is baffled: nothing happens that sense or experience said was probable. I wait to see what will happen, without a guess at what is to be ex-

pected. A storm, when the parliament meets, will no doubt be attempted. How the ministers are prepared to combat it, I don't know—but I hope sufficiently—if it spreads no farther:—at least I think they have no cause to fear the new leader who is to make the attack. * * * *

I have neither seen Mr. Wilson's book nor his answerers. So far from reading political pamphlets, I hunt for any books, except modern novels, that will not bring France to my mind, or that at least will put it out for a time. But every fresh person one sees, revives the conversation: and excepting a long succession of fogs, nobody talks of any thing else; nor of private news do I know a tittle. Adieu!

Yours ever.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

April 27, 1794.

This is no plot to draw you into committing even a good deed on a Sunday, which I suppose the *literality* of your conscience would haggle about, as if the day of the week constitutes the sin, and not the nature of the crime. But you may defer your answer, till to-night is become to-morrow by the clock having struck one; and then you may do an innocent thing without any guilt, which a

quarter of an hour sooner you would think abominable.—Nay, as an Irishman would say, you need not even *read* this note till the canonical hour is past.

In short, my dear madam, I gave your obliging message to lady W * * * *, who will be happy to see you on Tuesday, at one o'clock. But as her staircase is very bad, as she is in a lodging, I have proposed that this meeting, for which I have been pimping between two female saints, may be held here in my house, as I had the utmost difficulty last night in climbing her *scala santa*, and I cannot undertake it again. But if you are so good as to send me a favourable answer to-morrow, I will take care you shall find her here at the time I mentioned, with your true admirer.

TO THE REV. MR. BELOE.

Strawberry-hill, Dec. 2, 1794.

I DO beg and beseech you, good sir, to forgive me, if I cannot possibly consent to receive the dedication[1] you are so kind and partial as to propose to me. I have in the most positive, and almost uncivil manner, refused a dedication or two lately. Compliments on virtues, which the persons ad-

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[1] Of a translation of Aulus Gellius, by Mr. Beloe.

dressed, like me, seldom possessed, are happily exploded and laughed out of use. Next to being ashamed of having good qualities bestowed on me to which I should have no title, it would hurt to be praised on my erudition, which is most superficial; and on my trifling writings, all of which turn on most trifling subjects. They amused me while writing them; may have amused a few persons; but have nothing solid enough to preserve them from being forgotten with other things of as light a nature. I would not have your judgement called in question hereafter, if somebody reading your Aulus Gellius should ask, "What were those writings of lord O. which Mr. Beloe so much commends? Was lord O. more than one of the *mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease?*" Into that class I must sink—and I had rather do so imperceptibly, than be plunged down to it by the interposition of the hand of a friend, who could not gainsay the sentence.

For your own sake, my good sir, as well as in pity to my feelings, who am sore at your offering what I cannot accept, restrain the address to a mere inscription. You are allowed to be an excellent translator of classic authors—how unclassic would a dedication in the old-fashion manner appear! If you had published a new edition of Herodotus or Aulus Gellius, would you have ventured to prefix a Greek or Latin dedication to some modern lord with a Gothic title?

Still less, had those addresses been in vogue at Rome, would any Roman author have inscribed his work to Marcus, the incompetent son of Cicero, and told the unfortunate offspring of so great a man, *of his high birth and declension of ambition?* which would have excited a laugh on poor Marcus, who, whatever may have been said of him, had more sense than to leave proofs to the public of his extreme inferiority to his father.

I am, sir, &c. &c.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Saturday night, Jan. 24, 1795.

MY BEST MADAM,

I WILL never more complain of your silence, for I am perfectly convinced that you have no idle, no unemployed moments. Your indefatigable benevolence is incessantly occupied in good works; and your head and your heart make the utmost use of the excellent qualities of both. You have given proofs of the talents of one, and you certainly do not wrap the still more precious talent of the other in a napkin. Thank you a thousand times for your most ingenious plan[1]—may great success reward you!

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[1] The Cheap Repository for books, at this time set on foot.

I sent one instantly to the duchess of Gloucester, whose piety and zeal imitate yours at a distance; but she says she cannot afford to subscribe just at this severe moment, when the poor so much want her assistance — but she will on the thaw, and should have been flattered by receiving a plan from yourself. I sent another to lord H * * who, I trust, will show it to a much greater lady; and I repeated some of the facts you told me of the foul fiends, and their anti-*More* activity. I sent to Mr. White for half a dozen more of your plans, and will distribute them wherever I have hopes of their taking root and blossoming. — To-morrow I will send him my subscription;[2] and I flatter myself you will not think it a breach of Sunday, nor will I make this long, that I may not widen that fracture. — Good night! How calm and comfortable must your slumbers be on the pillow of every day's good deeds!

Monday.

Yesterday was dark as midnight. — Oh! that it may be the darkest day in all respects that we shall see! — But these are themes too voluminous and dismal for a letter, and which your zeal tells me you feel too intensely for me to increase, when you are doing all in your power to counteract them.

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[2] To the fund for promoting the printing and dispersion of the works sold at the Cheap Repository.

One of my grievances is, that the sanguinary inhumanity of the times has almost poisoned one's compassion, and makes one abhor so many thousands of our own species, and rejoice when they suffer for their crimes. I could feel no pity on reading the account of the death of Condorcet (if true, though I doubt it). He was one of the greatest monsters exhibited by history; and is said to have poisoned himself from famine and fear of the guillotine — and would be a new instance of what I suggested to you for a tract, to show, that though we must not assume a pretension to judging of divine judgements, yet we may believe that the œconomy of Providence has so disposed causes and consequences, that such villains as Danton, Robespierre, the duke of Orleans, &c. &c. &c. do but dig pits for themselves. — I will check myself, or I shall wander into the sad events of the last five years — down to the rage of party that has sacrificed Holland! What a fund for reflection and prophetic apprehension! May we have as much wisdom and courage to stem our malevolent enemies, as it is plain, to our lasting honour, we have had charity to the French emigrants, and have bounty for the poor who are suffering in this dreadful season!

Adieu, thou excellent woman! thou reverse of that hyæna in petticoats, Mrs. * * * *, who to this day discharges her ink and gall on Maria Antoinette, whose unparalleled sufferings have not

yet stanched that Alecto's blazing ferocity. Adieu! adieu!

Yours from my heart.

P. S. I have subscribed five guineas at Mr. White's to your plan.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 13, 1795.

I RECEIVED your letter and packet of lays and virelays[1], and heartily wish they may fall in bad ground, and produce a hundred thousand fold, as I doubt is necessary. How I admire the activity of your zeal and perseverance! Should a new church ever be built, I hope in a side chapel there will be an altar dedicated to St. Hannah, Virgin and Martyr; and that your pen, worn to the bone, will be enclosed in a golden reliquaire, and preserved on the shrine.

These few words I have been forced to dictate, having had the gout in my right hand above this fortnight; but I trust it is going off.

The duchess[2] was much pleased with your wri-

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1 Ballads, stories, tracts, &c., written by Mrs. H. More for the Cheap Repository.

2 Her royal highness the duchess of Gloucester.

ting to her, and ordered me to thank you. Your friend lady W * * * * * is in town, and looks very well.

Adieu, best of women!

Yours most cordially.

To WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.

Berkeley-square, April 4, 1795.

To judge of my satisfaction and gratitude on receiving the very acceptable present of your book,[1] sir, you should have known my extreme impatience for it from the instant Mr. Edwards had kindly favoured me with the first chapters. You may consequently conceive the mortification I felt at not being able to thank you immediately both for the volume and the obliging letter that accompanied it, by my right arm and hand being swelled and rendered quite immoveable and useless, of which you will perceive the remains if you can read these lines which I am forcing myself to write, not without pain, the first moment I have power to hold a pen; and it will cost me some time, I believe, before I can finish my whole letter, earnest as I am, sir, to give a loose to my gratitude.

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[1] The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici.

If you ever had the pleasure of reading such a delightful book as your own, imagine, sir, what a comfort it must be to receive such an anodyne in the midst of a fit of the gout that has already lasted above nine weeks, and which at first I thought might carry me to Lorenzo de Medici before he should come to me!

The complete volume has more than answered the expectations which the sample had raised. The Grecian simplicity of the style is preserved throughout; the same judicious candour reigns in every page; and without allowing yourself that liberty of indulging your own bias towards good or against criminal characters, which over-rigid critics prohibit, your artful candour compels your readers to think with you, without seeming to take a part yourself. You have shown from his own virtues, abilities, and heroic spirit, why Lorenzo deserved to have Mr. Roscoe for his biographer. — And since you have been so, sir (for he was not completely known before, at least not out of Italy), I shall be extremely mistaken if he is not henceforth allowed to be, in various lights, one of the most excellent and greatest men with whom we are well acquainted, especially if we reflect on the shortness of his life and the narrow sphere in which he had to act. Perhaps I ought to blame my own ignorance, that I did not know Lorenzo as a beautiful poet: I confess I did not. Now I do, I own, I admire some of his sonnets

more than several —— yes, even of Petrarch; for Lorenzo's are frequently more clear, less *alembiqués*, and not inharmonious as Petrarch's often are from being too crowded with words, for which room is made by numerous elisions, which prevent the softening alternacy of vowels and consonants. That thicket of words was occasioned by the embarrassing nature of the sonnet — a form of composition I do not love, and which is almost intolerable in any language but Italian, which furnishes such a profusion of rhymes. To our tongue the sonnet is mortal, and the parent of insipidity. The imitation in some degree of it was extremely noxious to a true poet, our Spenser; and he was the more injudicious by lengthening his stanza in a language so barren of rhymes as ours, and in which several words, whose terminations are of similar sounds, are so rugged, uncouth, and unmusical. The consequence was, that many lines which he forced into the service to complete the quota of his stanza are unmeaning, or silly, or tending to weaken the thought he would express.

Well, sir — but if you have led me to admire the compositions of Lorenzo, you have made me intimate with another poet of whom I had never heard, nor had the least suspicion, and who, though writing in a less harmonious language than Italian, outshines an able master of that country, as may be estimated by the fairest of all compari-

sons, which is when one of each nation versifies the same ideas and thoughts.

That novel poet I boldly pronounce is Mr. Roscoe. Several of his translations of Lorenzo are superior to the originals, and the verses more poetic — nor am I bribed to give this opinion by the present of your book, nor by any partiality, nor by the surprise of finding so pure a writer of history as able a poet. Some good judges to whom I have shown your translations entirely agree with me.

I will name one most competent judge, Mr. Hoole, so admirable a poet himself, and such a critic in Italian, as he has proved by a translation of Ariosto.

That I am not flattering you, sir, I will demonstrate; for I am not satisfied with one essential line in your version of the most beautiful, I think, of all Lorenzo's stanzas — It is his description of jealousy, in page 268, equal, in my humble opinion, to Dryden's delineations of the passions, and the last line of which is

Mai dorme, ed ostinata a se sol crede.

The thought to me is quite new, and your translation I own does not come up to it. — Mr. Hoole and I hammered at it, but could not content ourselves.—Perhaps by altering your last couplet you

may enclose the whole sense, and make it equal to the preceding six.

I will not ask your pardon, sir, for taking so much liberty with you. You have displayed so much candour and so much modesty, and are so free from pretensions, that I am confident you will allow that truth is the sole ingredient that ought to compose deserved incense; and if ever commendation was sincere, no praise ever flowed with purer veracity than all I have said in this letter does from the heart of, sir,

Your infinitely obliged humble servant.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawb. July 2, 1795.

I *will* write a word to you, though scarce time to write one, to thank you for your great kindness about the soldier, who shall get a substitute if he can.

As you are, or have been in town, your daughter will have told you in what a bustle I am, preparing — not to resist, but to receive an invasion of royalties to-morrow — and cannot even escape them like admiral Cornwallis, though seeming to make a semblance; for I am to wear a sword, and have appointed two aides de camp, my nephews, George and Horace C* * * *. If I *fall*, as ten to one but

I do, to be sure it will be a superb tumble, at the feet of a queen and eight daughters of kings; for, besides the six princesses, I am to have the duchess of York and the princess of Orange! Woe is me, at 78, and with scarce a hand and foot to my back! Adieu!

Yours, &c.

A Poor Old Remnant.

To the Hon. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, July 7, 1795.

I am not dead of fatigue with my royal visitors, as I expected to be, though I was on my poor lame feet three whole hours. Your daughter, who kindly assisted me in doing the honours, will tell you the particulars, and how prosperously I succeeded. The queen was uncommonly condescending and gracious, and deigned to drink my health when I presented her with the last glass, and to thank me for all my attentions. — Indeed my memory *de vieille cour* was but once in default. As I had been assured that her Majesty would be attended by her chamberlain, yet was not, I had no glove ready when I received her at the step of her coach: yet she honoured me with her hand to lead her up stairs; nor did I recollect my omission when I led her down again. Still, though

gloveless, I did not squeeze the royal hand, as vice-chamberlain Smith did to queen Mary.[1]

You will have stared, as I did, at the elector of Hanover deserting his ally the king of Great Britain, and making peace with the monsters. But Mr. F * * *, whom I saw at my sister's on Sunday, laughs at the article in the newspapers, and says it is not an unknown practice for stock-jobbers to hire an emissary at the rate of 500*l.* and dispatch to Franckfort, whence he brings forged attestations of some marvellous political event, and spreads it on 'Change, which produces such a fluctuation in the stocks, as amply overpays the expense of his mission.

This was all I learnt in the single night I was in town. I have not read the new French constitution, which seems longer than probably its reign will be. The five sovereigns will, I suppose, be the first guillotined. Adieu!

Yours ever.

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[1] It is said that queen Mary asked some of her attendant ladies what a squeeze of the hand was supposed to intimate?—They said, "Love."—"Then," said the queen, "my vice-chamberlain must be violently in love with me, for he always squeezes my hand."

Marshal Conway died three days after the date of this letter.

To Mrs. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, August 29, 1796.

You are not only the most beneficent, but the most benevolent of human beings. Not content with being a perfect saint yourself, which (forgive me for saying) does not always imply prodigious compassion for others; not satisfied with being the most disinterested, nay, the reverse of all patriots, for you sacrifice your very slender fortune, not to improve it, but to keep the poor honest instead of corrupting them; and you write politics as simply, intelligibly, and unartfully, not as cunningly as you can to mislead. — Well, with all these giant virtues, you can find room and time in your heart and occupations for harbouring and exercising what those monkeys of pretensions, the French, invented and called *les petites morales*, which were to supply society with filigrain duties, in the room of all virtues, which they abolished on their road to the adoption of philosophy and atheism — Yes, though for ever busied in exercising services and charities for individuals, or for whole bodies of people, you do not leave a cranny empty into which you can slip a kindness. Your inquiry after me to miss B * * * * is so friendly, that I cannot trust solely to her thanking you for your letter, as I am sure she will, having sent it to her as she is bathing in the sea at Bognor rocks; but I must

with infinite gratitude give you a brief account of myself — a very poor one indeed must I give. Condemned as a cripple to my couch for the rest of my days I doubt I am. Though perfectly healed, and even without a scar, my leg is so weakened that I have not recovered the least use of it, nor can move cross my chamber unless lifted up and held by two servants. This constitutes me totally a prisoner — But why should not I be so? What business had I to live to the brink of seventy-nine? And why should one litter the world at that age? Then I thank God, I have vast blessings; I have preserved my eyes, ears, and teeth; I have no pain left; and I would bet with any dormouse that it cannot outsleep me — And when one can afford to pay for every relief, comfort, or assistance, that can be procured at fourscore, dares one complain? Must not one reflect on the thousands of old poor, who are suffering martyrdom, and have none of those alleviations? — O my good friend, I must consider myself as at my best; for if I drag on a little longer, can I expect to remain even so tolerably. Nay, does the world present a pleasing scene? Are not the devils escaped out of the swine, and overrunning the earth headlong? What a theme for meditation, that the excellent humane Louis seize should have been prevented from saving himself by that monster Drouet, and that that execrable wretch should be saved even by those, some of whom one may

suppose he meditated to massacre; for at what does a Frenchman stop? — But I will quit this shocking subject, and for another reason too: I omitted one of my losses, almost the use of my fingers: they are so lame that I cannot write a dozen lines legibly, but am forced to have recourse to my secretary. — I will only reply by a word or two to a question you seem to ask; how I like * * * * * *? I do not care to say how little. —— Alas! she has reversed experience, which I have long thought reverses its own utility by coming at the wrong end of our life when we do not want it. This author knew the world and penetrated characters before she had stepped over the threshold; and now she has seen so much of it she has little or no insight at all — perhaps she apprehended having seen too much — and kept the bags of foul air that she brought from the Cave of Tempests too closely tied.

Adieu, thou who mightest be one of the cleverest of women if thou didst not prefer being *one* of the best! And when I say *one* of the best, I have not engaged my vote for the second.

Yours most gratefully.

To Mr. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 5, 1796.

Dear Sir,

Being struck with the extreme cold of last week, it has brought a violent gouty inflammation into one of my legs, and I was forced to be instantly brought to town very ill. As soon as I was a little recovered, I found here your most magnificent present of the second volume of Sepulchral Monuments, the most splendid work I ever saw, and which I congratulate myself on having lived long enough to see. Indeed I congratulate my country on its appearance exactly at so illustrious a moment, when the patriotism and zeal of London have exhibited so astonishing marks of their opulence and attachment to the constitution, by a voluntary subscription of seventeen millions of money in three days. Your book, sir, appearing at that very instant, will be a monument of a fact so unexampled in history; the treasure of fine prints with which it is stowed, well becomes such a production and such a work, the expense of which becomes it too. I am impatient to be able to sit up and examine it more, and am sure my gratitude will increase in proportion. As soon as I shall receive the complete sheets, I will have the whole work bound in the most superb manner that can be: and though, being so infirm now, and just entered into my eightieth year, I am not likely to

wait on you, and thank you, I shall be happy to have an opportunity, whenever you come this way, of telling you in person how much I am charmed with so splendid a monument of British glories, and which will be so proud an ornament to the libraries of any nation.

I am, sir,

With the highest gratitude and respect,

Your most obedient humble servant.

To the Rev. WILLIAM MASON.

The purport of Dr. Robertson's visit was to inquire where he could find materials for the reigns of king William and queen Anne, which he means to write as a supplement to David Hume. I had heard of his purpose, but did not own I knew it, that my discouragement might seem the more natural. I do not care a straw what he writes about the church's wet-nurse, goody Anne; but no Scot is worthy of being the historian of William, but Dr. Watson.

When he had told me his object, I said, "Write the reign of king William, Dr. Robertson! That is a great task! I look on him as the greatest man of modern times since his ancestor William prince of Orange." I soon found the doctor had very little idea of him, or had taken upon trust the

pitiful partialities of Dalrymple and Macpherson. I said, "Sir, I do not doubt but king William came over with a view to the crown. Nor was he called upon by patriotism, for he was not an Englishman, to assert our liberties. No; his patriotism was of a higher rank. He aimed not at the crown of England from ambition, but to employ its forces and wealth against Louis XIV. for the common cause of the liberties of Europe. The Whigs did not understand the extent of his views, and the Tories betrayed him. He has been thought not to have understood us; but the truth was, he took either party as it was predominant, that he might sway the parliament to support his general plan." The doctor, suspecting that I doubted his principles being enlarged enough to do justice to so great a character, told me he himself had been born and bred a Whig, though he owned he was *now* a moderate one — I believe, a very moderate one. I said Macpherson had done great injustice to another hero, the duke of Marlborough, whom he accuses of betraying the design on Brest to Louis XIV. The truth was, as I heard often in my youth from my father, my uncle, and old persons who had lived in those times, that the duke trusted the duchess with the secret, and she her sister the popish duchess of Tyrconnel, who was as poor and as bigoted as a church mouse. A corroboration of this was the wise and sententious answer of king William to

the duke, whom he taxed with having betrayed the secret. "Upon my honour, sir," said the duke, "I told it to nobody but my wife." "I did not tell it to mine," said the king.

I added, that Macpherson's and Dalrymple's invidious scandals really serve but to heighten the amazing greatness of the king's genius; for, if they say true, he maintained the crown on his head, though the nobility, the church-men, the country gentlemen, the people were against him; and though almost all his own ministers betrayed him—"But," said I, "nothing is so silly as to suppose that the duke of Marlborough and lord Godolphin ever meant seriously to restore king James. Both had offended him too much to expect forgiveness, especially from so remorseless a nature. Yet a re-revolution was so probable, that it is no wonder they kept up a correspondence with him, at least to break their fall if he returned. But as they never did effectuate the least service in his favour, when they had the fullest power, nothing can be inferred but king James's folly in continuing to lean on them. To imagine they meant to sacrifice his weak daughter, whom they governed absolutely, to a man who was sure of being governed by others, one must have as little sense as James himself had.

The precise truth I take to have been this. Marlborough and Godolphin both knew the meanness and credulity of James's character.

They knew that he must be ever dealing for partisans; and they might be sure, that if he could hope for support from the general and the lord treasurer, he must be less solicitous for more impotent supporters. "Is it impossible," said I to the doctor, "but they might correspond with the king even by Anne's own consent? Do not be surprised, sir," said I: "such things have happened. My own father often received letters from the pretender, which he always carried to George II. and had them indorsed by his majesty. I myself have seen them countersigned by the king's own hand."

In short, I endeavoured to impress him with proper ideas of his subject, and painted to him the difficulties, and the want of materials. But the booksellers will out-argue me, and the doctor will forget his education—Panem et Circenses, if you will allow me to use the latter for those that are captivated by favour in the *circle*, will decide his writing and give the colour. I once wished he should write the History of King William; but his Charles V. and his America have opened my eyes, and the times have shut his. Adieu!

To the Rev. WILLIAM MASON.

I have been reading a new French translation of the elder Pliny, of whom I never read but scraps before; because, in the poetical manner in which we learn Latin at Eton, we never become acquainted with the names of the commonest things, too undignified to be admitted into verse; and therefore I never had patience to search in a dictionary for the meaning of every substantive. I find I shall not have a great deal less trouble with the translation, as I am not more familiar with their common *drogues* than with the Latin. However, the beginning goes off very glibly, as I am not yet arrived below the planets. But do you know that this study, of which I have never thought since I learnt astronomy at Cambridge, has furnished me with some very entertaining ideas! I have long been weary of the common jargon of poetry. You bards have exhausted all the nature we are acquainted with; you have treated us with the sun, moon, and stars, the earth and the ocean, mountains and valleys, &c. &c. under every possible aspect. In short, I have longed for some American poetry, in which I might find new appearances of nature, and consequently of art. But my present excursion into the sky has afforded me more entertaining prospects, and newer phænomena. If I was as good a poet as

you are, I would immediately compose an idyl, or an elegy, the scene of which should be laid in Saturn or Jupiter; and then, instead of a niggardly soliloquy by the light of a single moon, I would describe a night illuminated by four or five moons at least, and they should be all in a perpendicular or horizontal line, according as Celia's eyes (who probably in that country has at least two pair) are disposed in longitude or latitude. You must allow that this system would diversify poetry amazingly —And then Saturn's belt! which the translator says in his notes, is not round the planet's waist, like the shingles, but is a globe of crystal that encloses the whole orb, as you may have seen an enamelled watch in a case of glass. If you do not perceive what infinitely pretty things may be said, either in poetry or romance, on a brittle heaven of crystal, and what furbelowed rainbows they must have in that country, you are neither the Ovid nor natural philosopher I take you for. Pray send me an eclogue directly upon this plan — and I give you leave to adopt my idea of Saturnian Celias having their every thing quadrupled — which would form a much more entertaining rhapsody than Swift's thought of magnifying or diminishing the species in his Gulliver. How much more execution a fine woman would do with two pair of *piercers!* or four! and how much longer the honey-moon would last, if both the sexes have (as no doubt they have) four times the pas-

sions, and four times the means of gratifying them! — I have opened new worlds to you — You must be four times the poet you are, and then you will be above Milton, and equal to Shakspeare, the only two mortals I am acquainted with, who ventured beyond the visible diurnal sphere, and preserved their intellects. Dryden himself would have talked nonsense, and, I fear, bawdy, on my plan; but you are too good a divine, I am sure, to treat my quadruple love but platonically. In Saturn, notwithstanding their glass-case, they are supposed to be very cold; but platonic love of itself produces frigid conceits enough, and you need not augment the dose — But I will not dictate. The subject is new; and you, who have so much imagination, will shoot far beyond me. Fontenelle would have made something of the idea even in prose; but Algarotti would dishearten any body from attempting to meddle with the system of the universe a second time in genteel dialogue. Good-night! I am going to bed. — Mercy on me! if I should dream of Celia with four times the usual attractions!

TO THE COUNTESS OF * * * *.

January 13, 1797.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOU distress me infinitely by showing my idle notes, which I cannot conceive can amuse any body. My old-fashioned breeding impels me every now and then to reply to the letters you honour me with writing; but in truth very unwillingly, for I seldom can have any thing particular to say; I scarce go out of my own house, and then only to two or three very private places, where I see nobody that really knows any thing — and what I learn comes from newspapers, that collect intelligence from coffee-houses — consequently, what I neither believe nor report. At home I see only a few charitable elders, except about fourscore nephews and nieces of various ages, who are each brought to me once a year, to stare at me as the Methusalem of the family; and they can only speak of their own contemporaries, which interest me no more than if they talked of their dolls, or bats and balls. Must not the result of all this, madam, make me a very entertaining correspondent? — and can such letters be worth showing? — or can I have any spirit when so old, and reduced to dictate? Oh! my good madam, dispense with me from such a task, and think how it must add to it to apprehend such letters being shown. Pray

send me no more such laurels, which I desire no more than their leaves when decked with a scrap of tinsel, and stuck on twelfth-cakes that lie on the shop-boards of pastry-cooks at Christmas. I shall be quite content with a sprig of rosemary thrown after me, when the parson of the parish commits my dust to dust.[1] Till then, pray, madam, accept the resignation of

Your ancient servant.

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[1] Lord Orford died in little more than six weeks after the date of this letter.

THE END.

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